













# **REBEL INDIA**

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DEDICATED TO THOSE  
WHO  
FACED BRITISH BULLETS  
AND BAYONETS  
FOR THE CAUSE OF  
INDIAN FREEDOM  
A CAUSE WHICH THEY  
LOVED SO SINCERELY

**“उनकी यादमें जिन्होंने अपने खूनसे  
हिंदुस्तानके बागको सींचा”**

**मौलाना आज़ाद**

## PREFACE

The August uprisal is a towering milestone in the path of India's march towards freedom. The Indian National Congress at its annual session in Bombay in August 1942 passed the historical August resolution echoing the ever increasing desire for freedom which was burning in the hearts of the millions in this country. The British bureaucracy clapped the leaders immediately after the "Quit India" resolution was passed in the A.I.C.C., inspite of Mahatmaji's clear exposition that he would see the Viceroy before launcing any movement. In an interview at Bombay before the passing of the resolution by the A.I.C.C. Mahatma Gandhi said, "I have definitely contemplated an interval between passing the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know that what I contemplate doing according to my wont can be in any way described as in the nature of negotiation. But a letter will certainly go the Viceroy not as a ultimatum but as earnest pleading for avoiding a conflict".

Circumstances leading to the August uprising of the people of India need a brief review of the events that had occurred. The Congress had rejected the ministry and wanted in clear terms the clarification on the objectives of the war. Cripps came with a mission to India which, however, failed. The reason for the breakdown of the Cripp's proposals has been summed up by the then Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his letter to Sir Stafford Cripps :—"You had referred both privately and in course of public statements to a National Government and a "Cabinet" consisting of 'ministers'. These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new Government would function with full powers as a Cabinet with the Viceroy acting as a constitutional head. But the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having

all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal changes, but we did ask for definite assurances, conventions which would indicate that the new Government would function as a free Government, the members of which act as members of a Cabinet in a constitutional Government. In regard to the conduct of the war and connected activities the Commander-in-Chief would have freedom and he would act as War Minister. We were informed that nothing can be said at this stage, even vaguely and generally, about the conventions that should govern the Government and the Viceroy. The picture of the Government, which was so like the old in all essential features is such that we cannot fit into it." Congress was always anxious to form the national government in such a critical period of India's day, world's history, Maulana Azad also categorically stated "we are not interested in the Congress as such gaining power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power." Thus the Cripps Mission failed. Such was the political atmosphere—dispair and disappointment, haunt of Japanese invasion, British defeat in every theatre of war, and on the other hand, dangers of economic dislocations, widespread distress as the cost of living rose beyond means. Behind this background, the Indian National Congress raised the "Quit India" slogan and inspired the people with the mantra "Do or Die" (Kareng ye marenga).

In this short volume we have tried to record the up-risings of the people of all the provinces except N.W.F.P. and the Punjab, the details of which could not be gathered. We shall try to make amends of our omission and commission in the second edition.

The reservoir of accumulating resents of the perplexed people found outlet both in violent and non-violent demonstrations. The people were newly initiated and with the tried patriots made a determined effort to break the shackles of foreign domination. The August Movement helps to add one more disgraceful chapter to the black history of the British Rule in India. The atrocities which they perpetrated, reminds

one of Nadir Shah and Chengis Khan of whom we have read in British made history of India. The much condemned Belsen Camp of the Nazis will fade into insignificance when compared with the brutality and repression made on the prisoners in the Lahore Fort, and on the unarmed people outside. No complete figures of arrests and prosecutions are yet available but from the statements made by the Home Member in the Assembly, the following may be taken as an official estimate for the period upto the end of 1942.

Persons arrested 60,229. Persons detained under Defence of India Rules,—18,000. Persons killed by police or military firing—940. Persons injured due to police or military firing—1,630. It was also stated by the Home Member that the military had to be called out in about 60 places, that the police had to resort to firing on about 538 occasions and that planes were used in five places to quell the crowds. We have seen how British Government suppressed publication of news taking shelter under the defence of India Rules and how Press was gagged. The estimate submitted by the Home Member is absolutely unreliable and the reader may get an idea of the police and military atrocities while he passes through this book. In appendix 'D' we have given a detailed list of the sufferings and woes which the people of Midnapore had to undergo at the hands of the military.

In compiling this book we claim no originality. We have, in our humble way, tried to present before the readers a short account of people's uprising, the absence of intelligent middle class people from the movement, on the one hand, and the British repression on the other. For this we had relied on newspapers, and on Congress enquiry Committee reports. Among the newspapers, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hindusthan Standard, Free Press Journal, National Herald, Nationalist, Free India, New Orissa and Blitz, deserve mention. Our thanks are also due to Shri Janakinath Basu, M. A., who inspired us to undertake to compile a book of this nature. We are grateful to Shri Prahlad Kumar Pramanik who tried to bring out this volume within a very short time. We shall



fail in our duty if we do not mention the name of Shri Naresh Chandra Ghosh who constantly helped us.

The August Revolution has not failed, it has been suppressed for the time being, but not dead. Repression cannot kill a nation.

The unflinching desire of freedom is smouldering in the hearts of the people and will blaze out again to free Mother India from the chains of slavery. Jai Hind !

*Calcutta*  
*August 9, 1946.*

BEJAN MITRA  
PHANI CHAKRAVORTY

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**PART I**  
**ASSAM**



# ASSAM

## I

The Official account of the 1942 struggle in Assam is yet to be made known to the outside world. The message that was broadcast from far off Bombay in early August of that year found an echo in the en masse arrest of Assamese leaders like Maulvi M. Tayyebullah, Mr F. M. Ahmedh, Ex-Finance Minister, Sjt B. R. Mehdi, Ex-President of the A. P. C. C. and even Dr H. K. Das and Sjt Liladhar Baruah, both in charge of the Bailhata Khadi Asram, Sjt D. Sharma (Jorhat) Chief Whip of the Congress Party and two others on August 9, 1942. Sjt G. N. Bardoli, the Assembly leader and Shri Siddhinath Sarmah, the General Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee who had gone to Bombay to attend the A. I. C. C. meeting and met Gandhiji, were arrested as soon as they set foot on the soil of Assam.

The struggle waged by Assam to break down the shackles of slavery is largely a struggle of Assam's womanhood—a credit which no other province of India can claim to the extent Assam does. The names of Kanaklata Barua, a girl in her teens and Sreejukta Bhogeswari Phookanani, an elderly woman, are to-day household names throughout the Brahmaputra valley. Kanak, a tender girl of barely fifteen whose marriage was settled and who must have been dreaming a happy home and a happier future at the time was automatically drawn to the all-sweeping whirlwind, brought up as she was in a home where the Congress message used to be regarded as a command.

On September 20, 1942, the people of Gohpur in Darrang district apparently put the doctrine of nonviolence to the extremest test, by undertaking to occupy the police thana. An assembly of some 500 men marched to the thana lead



by Kanaklata with a national flag in her hands, two or three boys and other young men followed them. A large crowd of spectators numbering about 5000 had also gathered around the thana to witness the unique scene. Between 12 and 3 P. M. the processionists came into the compound of the thana. The officer-in-charge of the thana, Rebati Mohan Shome, who was with the armed police to meet them, asked the girl, Shrimati Kanaklata Barua, not to trespass on the thana premises. It is said that the girl told the thana officers that the thana belonged to the people's Raj : commandingly she added, "Unless the thana officer and his men wanted to act as the servants of the people, they must clear out and allow the people to take possession of the place."

The Daroga, asked her not to proceed further and told her if she did, he would order fire. The girl asked her followers to come forward to embrace the fire. She enjoined the Daroga to do his duty, which will be definitely replied by hers. She came forward only a step when a constable fired directly at her chest and killed her spontaneously. The tri-colour flag was taken care of from the succumbing and collapsing palms of Kanak by her comrade Mukunda Kaoti and he too was pulled down by another bullet and both died as a result of the firings.

By this time a batch of volunteers succeeded in getting to the top of the thana building and unfurling the national flag, while cold-blooded murders through indiscriminate firing were going on. The Government version is that there were only nine deaths as a result of this firing. As a matter of fact the number of deaths were apprehended to be at least 60 with an equal number of wounded. One of the women killed was pregnant and six other women were injured. Some of the wounded were picked up and taken to the town hospital. A brave British Commander called Captain Flinch is said to have placed the barrel of his revolver at the chest of a seriously wounded person, at Dhekiajulia hospital and to have threatened to kill him, mistaking him to be a Congressman, where the medical officer of the hospital

prevented him from shooting saying that the former had no right to do anything to persons in the hospital. Some wounded men crept home to die and one or two yet remained untraced.

The story of Srijukta Bhogeswari Phookanani is as thrilling and inspiring as that of Kanaklata. Phookanani an elderly woman, was particularly fond of her grand child Ratnaprabha who went to a social feast organised in front of the Congress house, then a siezed property situated about five miles off the town of Nowgong. The grandmother followed the granddaughter to the place. Ratnaprabha was unfortunately carrying a Congress Tri-colour in her hand and that proved a terrible weapon to the mighty representative of the mighty British Lion then gasping for its life after receiving a violent shake from the Japanese. It was snatched from her unwilling hands and in the tussle between the officer and the lean, unarmed girl, of course, the victory favoured Britain. The scene was as unseemly as it was distressingly indecent. The elderly grandmother could no longer stand the scene and in her fury she got hold of another flag and with its butt whipped or attempted to whip the officer whose sick skin because of long hiding from the scorching gaze of the Indian sun was so delicate that the grandmother's feeble blow with stick caused, it is to be believed, a serious cut in his face. It is not reported whether the officer had to be hospitalised and if so how long was he detained. However, it is not the blow or its effect that mattered much. The thing, that was taken notice of, was the spirit, the hitherto unknown spirit of the Indian womanhood. Without a moment's delay the bullet laid her down for a misadventure that so often the Indian grandmother shows, in almost every Indian home in defence of her grandson or granddaughter.

Again in places like Barhampur, Gohpur, Barapujia, Teok, it was the women of Assam who first faced the military and the armed police and invariably led the processions. It was the women of Assam, again, who under leadership of Shrimati Amalprova Das, was the first to enter openly the extensive

areas terrorised by shooting and excesses of all kinds and bring courage and cheer to those who were oppressed. It seems women's association with the national struggle has become abiding. In the period of panic caused by beastly ravage of military in Upper Assam a strong organisation spread over the entire district ably functioned under the leadership of Shrimati Annapriya Barua, and Sudhalata Dutta.

The first 18 days after the arrest of the leaders on the 9th of August 1942, were not at all eventful. Throughout Assam, except possibly one instance of dislocation of the telegraphic lines, which was subsequently traced to the wild elephants, there were no incidents. There were, of course, widespread protests throughout the country in the shape of hartals which extended even to the village huts, the strikes, in the schools and colleges and the processions and demonstrations. But the bureaucracy was not less aggressive on that account. They were proceeding to crush the people according to their preconceived plan. The arrests were effected simultaneously with the searches of houses, seizure of property and funds belonging to the Congress, the Emergency or Shanti-Sena Committees and Khadi organisations. Offices of the Local Committees in the mofussil and also those of the Provincial and District Committees were either demolished, burnt or occupied by the police.

In this way, the ground was prepared and a full scale blood thirsty acts of revenge upon Congressmen and the people who stood behind them was launched by the bureaucracy all of a sudden. But even against all these preparations, neither the people nor the Congressmen betrayed the least sign of fear or wavering. They did whatever was possible for them to do. No guidance, no direction, no programme from the Congress leaders, the people rose in rebellion spontaneously to give the final death blow to the British Imperialists.

For about four months, the civil machinery of the Government ceased to function. Police, both armed and civil, ceased to function except in marching by dozens to

the storm centres of "revolt" and carrying out all imaginable atrocities. The magistracy's only duty was confined to the trial of men, women and boys, arrested for the disobedience of orders under lawless laws, such as the Defence of India Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act and other Ordinances promulgated in the meanwhile. In most places, people set up their own Panchayats where trials were held. Police work was done by the villagers. These Panchayats, in some places, went to the extent of having their jails with a staff. Revenue was raised by some of them by sale of "huts, markets fisheries, etc." Nothing was allowed to come out of villages and breaches of orders by these authorities in this direction were seriously resisted by the villagers. Transport of paddy, cattle, vegetables, attempted by dissenting agencies were obstructed by the volunteers and in carrying the matter to the extreme, the Local Board roads, not to speak of the P.W.D. highways, were breached.

Sometimes, the carts and the vehicles of recalcitrant parties, who were mostly Muslims, became the target of the people's fire and suffered damage. The Civil Police did not interfere in these activities. It was only through the intervention of the armed police, committing all kinds of excesses, that access could be had to villages for enquiry.

It would not be possible in the brief space of this report to present in full, details of occurrence taking place even within the intensive period of the movement as they were spread throughout the province. Of all the six districts of Assam, the movement prevailed in most intense form in the district of Nowgong till Gandiji's fast.

Nowgong saw the acts of extreme highhandedness and the most wanton cruelty characterised the conduct of the Executive and the Police towards the people. The only ostensible act that could be brought against the villagers was that a batch of youngmen was found to burn some paddy grass over a wooden bridge near Bebejia.

On August 28, a force of military police remained in hiding in water under Bebejia bridge. When a number of

people of the village including some youngmen came near the bridge at dusk, the hidiers shot down and killed two of them when one of the crowd shouted out that the military remained in hiding under the bridge. The next day, some of this party of the military police wantonly shot another young man on a bridge near Roha, 59 miles from Gauhati.

Not satisfied with merely killing men, they fell upon the innocent villagers of Bebejia and under the plea of realising a collective fine about which none knew anything at that time, they surrounded the village at midnight and brutally assaulted any man or woman who tried to leave the village; on the next day, they made all the villagers, about 400 in number men, women and children, march under a strong cordon of armed police to the town (Nowgong) police office, a distance of 9 miles in the heat of the scorching noon. Some of the women belonged to highly respectable families. Such a lady with a baby only three days old was dragged with the result that the innocent baby died within a few hours and the lady herself continued ill for a long time.

The system of hunting men during the night by the police and the military in Bebejia and the surrounding villages of Barapujia in the District of Nowgong continued for several weeks. Tilak Singh who was the leader of the Shanti Senas keeping watch on that particular night was a victim of indiscriminate military firing. This place has been the centre work of the Congress for the last 21 years, a fair proportion of the population consising of simple, plain, tribal people. Being a centre of constructive activities, it was also a centre of the Shanti Sena organisation. The villages used to station Shanti Senas at the entrances from amongst the villagers by turn whose business was to guard the villages and give timely warning to the people by blowing the horn in case of any imminent danger. When the military police arrived at the spot with their rifles, the brave Tilak blew the horn as the signal. The military captain with his revolver pointed at Tilak Singh asked him not to do so any more, but he said he must carry out the duties

that were placed upon him, and blew his horn again. This was considered enough offence for Tilak Singh to lose his life. He was fired at from within an arm's length by the military officer, and died on the spot.

The sound of the revolver and the signals drew to the place a large number of men, women and children of the village who surrounded the military with torches in hand. The women were the first to volunteer themselves to be killed or arrested. The guardians of law fired again and wounded five or six more men. In face of the military wantonly using their pistols and bayonets the people collected the body of Tilak Singh and removed it for the purpose of a fitting funeral. The next morning saw the arrest of some three hundred villagers to be kicked, beaten and humiliated. A Shanti Sena camp was raided and put on fire by the military who put under arrest a large number of Shanti Senas and ordered these to be beaten while the house was burning. A boy spoke to the Commander of the barbarous conduct. The Commander thereupon became extremely furious, jumped upon the boy, severely kicked him and threw the boy in the burning fire. Fortunately, he managed to crawl out of the fire. Some villagers rescued him.

The Roha H. E. School incident is significant. On the School building the Tri-colour Flag was flying as usual for the last four or five years. The School was empty since the students did not come and the teachers were alone in the school. When a European officer who happened to pass by saw the flag, he immediately entered into the school compound and insisted on the school teachers getting to the top and bringing down the flag. On the refusal of the teachers to do this the military fell on them and subjected them to beating.

A far more serious trial awaited the people of Barhampore which lies five miles east of Nowgong. This was one of the many places in which the Congress had an office and a Shanti Sena camp of their own. By August all these offices were occupied and locked up by the police. But

this did not deter the villagers from arranging the village feast on a particular evening on the site of the office and the camp. A large number of people collected ; many carried national flags, parties sang songs, while others were busy cooking meals. The information of this demonstration reached the military and police was posted in the town. A batch of soldiers and armed police led by an I.C.S. officer, Mr Ruse, and Captain Flinch of the Assam Rifles and Deputy Superintendant of Police came to the scene of occurrence. It was getting dark by that time. As some girls passed by with national flags in their hands, some of the officers succeeded in snatching away a few of these. But one girl named Ratna Phookan aged 15, resisted the attempt of the commander who was struggling to take possession of the flag. The mother of the girl, an old woman, rushed to the commander and dealt a cut with a small bamboo branch on his face. This was enough to set ablaze the orgy of murder, that followed. The old woman was shot with a pistol then and there. The crowd who now came forward to protect the girl led by Khagi Ram Hazarika was then fired at without adequate warning. Two more of the young men including Thogi Ram who stood there firm as rocks, lay dead and several others were wounded. The crowd was again ordered to disperse but they replied by only surrounding the dead bodies and the wounded.

A short while afterwards, the P.S. and the Civil Surgeon arrived there. The crowd, unarmed as it was, remained calm and collected. These officers made one more attempt to take away the bodies of the wounded. The Civil Surgeon had to rest contented with an examination of the bodies on the spot and then to retire with the S.P. The whole crowd remained as calm and collected as before and guarded the dead bodies whole night, bedecked them with flowers and took snaps in the morning, and leading an unprecedented large procession consigned them to the pyre.

The heroism of Thogi Ram Bora, a young man of 25 years has almost passed into a legend. It is said that while dying

he left his only belongings consisting of a purse, a fountain-pen and ten pice as legacy to the Congress and Independent India. The wife expressed sentiments that would give credit to anyone in India. She said that she gloried in the death of her husband for the cause of her country, being one of those wives who with tears were cleansing the feet of Mother India which was rendered dirty by dross of slavery. The incident happened on September 16, 1942.

Dhekiajuli which is situated 16 miles west of Tezpur is a place populated mostly with tribal people, ex-tea garden labour. The firing in the 'state which is wider in scope is equally tragic. On the 20th of September 1942 more than ten thousand people marched towards the police station in order to hoist the national flag on the Thana building where firing was resorted to and more than 20 persons including a girl of 12, Phuleswari by name was killed as a result of this firing. In the face of bullets, firing of guns, a volunteer succeeded in hoisting the national flag on the Thana building who was, of course shot dead then and there. Not only the services of the military were requisitioned but also paid goondas by hundreds were engaged who perpetrated incredible atrocities on the people. These goondas who were hiding themselves behind the Thana premises armed with lathis came out on the scene and many fell under their blows. The goondas and military chased the tribal and labour women to all imaginable corners.

A big week-end market day synchronised with the day of attack on the Thana. In the meanwhile fresh requisitions of military from the town reached the spot who mistaking the bazar people to be a Congress crowd indiscriminately shot at it; people were most ignominiously belaboured and women maltreated. In this adventure the military killed about 16 and wounded about 100; of these killed, three were women one of whom was pregnant.

On the 21st September when the news of atrocities reached Tezpur town the citizens organised a meeting to condemn the action of the military and the police at Dhekiajuli and



Gohpur. Though all entrances to the town were barricaded by armed forces people began to assemble in the town maidan till the assembly swelled into a few thousands. A charge against the crowd was ordered, lathis, guns and bayonets were freely used as a result of which scores lay wounded and bleeding at the maidan. According to a modest computation the number of wounded was not less than one hundred.

Jolah is a small village within the jurisdiction of Patacharkuchi police station. On the 25th of September the people gathered at a meeting which was attended by police officers. He ordered the dispersal of the crowd, which he succeeded by force and threats. On the way back to Thana the police officer came across few men who were back from the meeting and were taking rest by the roadside. Like a monomaniac his empty head carried only one word 'disperse' and as soon as he saw them he ordered them to disperse which the persons naturally refused to do, this being no meeting. Immediately the officer took recourse to the jungle law and fired. Two were killed, Madan Chandra Burman a student of Class VII of the Bajali H. E. School and Rouwthram Das of village of Sadari. Next to this, in course of his journey back, he came across another group of men whom he fired upon and succeeded in wounding a few.

There was such bloodshed in Nowgong, Darrang and Kamrup—blood of boys and girls and of innocent labourers and peasants whose crime in the eyes of the bureaucrats was the demand of freedom for their motherland in bondage. On being interrogated on these issues by Mr. Rohini Kumar Chowdhury, Sir M. Saadullah, the Premier of Assam gave the following answer on the floor of the assembly :—

"The next conclusion that I have arrived at is their efforts to establish the authority and prestige of the Congress party by a programme of processions and meetings in defiance of the authority and in certain places by trying to run a parallel system of government. It is in pursuance of this part of the prog-

ramme that unfortunate happenings mentioned to the house by my honourable friend Mr R. K. Chowdhury, took place, viz. the incidents leading up to the firing of Golpur and Dhekiajuli in the Darrang district and in Barhampore in the Nowgong district and in a place near Patacharkuchi in the Kamrup district."

Attacks on Allied airfields were directed. Sorbhug aerodrome incidents which occurred on the 26th of August 1942 in the district of Kamrup is an instance of the kind. It is not an isolated attempt engineered secretly to sabotage an aerodrome but an open attack by a number of village people on an Allied airfield. An aerodrome was being built in the place which transformed the quiet wayside station into a centre of seething military activities. The materials collected by the military contractors, mainly thatch and bamboo, were burned. Three M.E.S. vehicles shared the same fate. The people set fire to the inspection bungalow and a number of M.E.S. quarters. It was a colossal fire. It was so huge that the S.D.O. of Barpetta who lived at a distance of sixteen miles away from the place of occurrence was drawn by it. He rushed in his car to the ferry ghat only to find that the ferry boat and the ferry men were not to be found at the ghat. Otherways leading to the place of occurrence were either completely gutted or cut off according to previous plans in order to prevent additional police or military help from outside. The total loss estimated for this alleged incendiarism is computed to be in the neighbourhood of two lakhs of rupees.

Congress workers of Surma valley comprising Sylhet, Silchar, Moulvi Bazar, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Delhia, Kulaura, Srimangal, Rajnagar, Biswanth Renga, Pancakhanda, Sonkapan, Dhakadakshinand Jagadishpur—briefly speaking the entire Surma valley stood like a solid rock grim and determined. The full details of Surma valley are not yet available but what will be narrated will give ample testimony as to how the people of Surma valley boldly faced Government repression of the worst type.

As in other places of Assam the women in Surma valley took initiative in many cases and near about 40 of them were arrested and imprisoned. Students played an important role and near about 1200 of them were arrested and imprisoned. The Muslim workers also did not lag behind; 300 of them mostly workers and belonging to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema were arrested or imprisoned. The movement in this valley took shape mostly in the form of burning of Government buildings, cutting off of communications and wrecking of trains. The police and the Government mighty as they are took up the challenge and perpetrated all kinds of atrocities. Hundreds of innocent men were arrested without the least cause under 129 D.I.R. Many were arrested without warrant and kept in police lock-ups. In some cases they were put under handcuff, beaten and tortured. Excitement and restlessness among people more specially amongst the students continued. The movement in this valley was mostly a movement of the students. They were on the breaking point, they took the *mantra* of 'do or die' and nothing could stop them. They thought that hours of supreme decision had arrived and there was no time to be lost. There was a keen race among the students to become the first martyr. The leaders of different groups attended a secret meeting held in the cantonment area on the 19th August. Among the group leaders were included Khasis, Nagas, Garos, Nepalis, Manipurees, Assamese and Bengalees. Age varied from 19 to 31, three young girls also attended.

Apprehending trouble military and police were posted at the Dawki and Borpani bridges. Military guard was placed around the Government buildings,—telegraph and telephone offices. C. I. D. officers in plain dress threw a cordon around the Secretariat hill.

At the outset, group leaders vowed obedience to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Indian National Congress. The entire situation leading to leaders' arrest was reviewed and after some discussion it was decided to organize one united group to be known as Free India's Fighting Force.

(F. I. F. F.) under a supreme commander. A Committee of Action was formed to draw up plans.

Plans which were as follows were worked in some places :

In order to paralyse the administration and to obstruct the movement of military and police who were likely to be utilised against the people in their fight for freedom the people were allowed to blow up bridges and cut telegraph and telephone lines. But they were warned that while doing this previous approval of the leaders must be obtained.

Workers were sent to the countryside to launch campaign against recruit to the military departments. An intelligence department was organized to watch the movement of military and police. Garo, Naga, Nepalee and Manipuri workers were deputed to organize the tribal areas with necessary instructions.

Women workers attached to F. I. F. F. took charge of organizing amenities for workers. They organized Red Cross and First Aid parties. Their services and devotion to duty in the face of constant danger created history in bitter days of national struggle. They collected warm clothing for the workers, distributed thousands of bandages, cotton lints, iodine, etc, for workers and countrymen all over Assam during those fateful months. Propaganda, finance and recruitment committees were formed and several workers' training camps were established.

Big placards bearing 'Go back John Bull', 'Quit India' were seen everywhere. Thousands of envelopes were sent to European gentlemen all over Assam, asking them to quit India within a specified time. Non-violent war of nerves continued and new methods were adopted every time. Thousands of leaflets in different languages were distributed urging people to join the national struggle. Members of the F.I.F.F. acted as non-violent guerrillas and in spite of countless hardships worked very smoothly. Extensive searches and indiscriminate arrests, handcuffing, roping and torturing of workers notwithstanding the members of the F.I.F.F. carried on their

mission. But soon mass arrests externment and internment of people continued and the team work of the F. I. F. F. was broken. They were disorganized, new decisions could not be taken. Any more work in Shillong, Khasi and Jaintia hills became impossible. General headquarters of the F. I. F. F. had to be removed from Shillong. Workers were asked to disperse and they were directed to go into the villages to contact the villagers. Women section of F.I.F.F. carried on with their useful work and during the great Bengal famine played an important part in giving relief to the people.

The eventful life of the Free India's Fighting Force came to an end towards the close of 1942 when Shri Kushal Chandra Konwar of the Assam valley, a member of the F.I.F.F. was arrested and hanged during the great revolution.

The police forces in Assam were given a very long rope and during this time a complete Police Raj was instituted which brought about untold sufferings on the hapless population. Leopold Amery gave a resounding pat on the back of the police which provided them with immense inspiration to work havoc on the 'rebels'. The police atrocities of the worst type ever conceivable were seen in the name of collective taxes by the Government. All possible coercive methods were adopted, soldiers were sent into the villages, the military police used to get into the houses of the poor villagers, insult the womenfolk, break open the little treasures of the poor and seize their utensils even. The following is a graphic picture as to how the taxes were collected which was placed before the Assembly by Mr R. K. Chowdhury and subsequently admitted as true by the Premier. We quote in extenso Mr Choudhury's words :—

"At least for the incident of Nidhon Rajbansi, there cannot be any shadow of justification. These incidents took place in a village called Kokira. A constable was deputed for realizing collective fine of Rs 8/- from one Nidhon Rajbanshi of this village. The latter was unable to pay in cash and thereupon the constable seized the only pair of plough bullocks. As he was taking them away the man protested



**REBEL : JAIPRAKASH NARAIN**



saying that it was his only pair of plough cattle. On that the constable abused him and he returned it. The constable then beat him with a lathi. It is quite untrue to say that the latter used a 'dao'. No 'dao' injury was found on the constable's person. This took place during the day.

At night at about 11 o'clock the S.D.O. on his way back from Dudhnai got the report of the occurrence and went to the spot with two lorry-loads of armed sepoy and European officers. He found that the man was inside the closed doors of the house with a light burning. He was asked to come out which he refused. On that the house was surrounded and the firing was ordered by the S.D.O. One European officer opened fire. Six shots were fired and some bullets hit the man inside on the knee joints and he fell down with profuse bleeding. One of the bullets pierced the walls in the opposite and struck a sepoy standing outside the wall killing him instantly. At this the door was opened by force and sepoy went in and pierced the man with bayonet as they do the wild boars and he died. Both the dead bodies were brought, the man's body was post-mortemed, the sepoy's body was buried with honour. The man's post-mortemed body was returned to his relatives. This is the report I have received.

The points are whether there was seizure of property in the day or no, whether any incident took place at night. There could not be any seizure of bullocks at night. If the seizure had taken during the day and if there was an altercation between the man and the constable he could have been hauled up and tried. Then Sir, the collective fine must be supposed to have been already realized, because a pair of plough bullocks would cost more than Rs 80/-. If that is so, what justification the S.D.O. and those sepoy and armed police had in visiting the man's place at about 11 o'clock at night? These facts can be very easily ascertained whether the seizure of the bullocks took place during the day or whether any incident in which the Sepoy and Nidhon were killed occurred during the night. If there was seizure in the day there could not be any justification for the incidents



at night. But why should these have taken place ? So my request to the honourable premier is that if the facts are as stated then the officer who is responsible for killing this man ought to be tried for murdering a man like this in his capacity as a public servant."

The movement, thus, in Asasm was two-fold : (1) Constructive one to make the village unit ready to declare independence within a particular period ; (2) an obstructive one in the sense of stopping all supplies from the villages from reaching the military or the Government contractors.



**PART II.**  
**BENGAL**



# BENGAL

The movement of 1942 carried on in Bengal was largely a movement of Midnapore. Midnapore will remain in men's memory not only as the place where British bureaucrats did their worst to subdue a people in revolt but as a district which established a national Government in face of imminent invasion from without and repression from within.

The Government paid a tribute to this organization in their pamphlet—"Some Facts About the Disturbances, 1942-43" thus : "In Midnapore in Bengal the operations of the rebels indicated considerable care and planning, effective warning system had been devised, elementary tactical principles were observed, for instance, encirclement and flanking movements, clearly on pre-arranged signals. The forces of disorder were accompanied by doctors and nursing orderlies to attend the casualties and its intelligence system was effective."

The stories of undaunted courage, inexhaustible energy, resourcefulness and ability of the leaders who organized the people against Government repression sound like romance. We had been admiring the Russians for the way they resisted the German invasion. What the people of this district seemed to have done during that time was not less noteworthy, perhaps that was why of all places in Bengal Gandhiji chose to visit only this district for it had gone through the worst ordeal of police and military hooliganism, fire, cyclone and famine. He was greatly touched by the sufferings of the people and went there primarily to give them consolation. He would rather spend a few days in one area, meeting local workers, acquainting himself with the situation personally and see in what way he could help rather than rush about from village to village making speeches and providing 'tamasha', to use his own words, for the people.

## TAMLUK

The people of Tamluk sub-division organized the whole of the sub-division in 1942 for self-protection against the Japanese should they arrive and the British withdraw, not by joining hands with the British bureaucrats, as the Communist Party of India did, but by appealing to the people to be fearless, to depend in their own resources, to resist oppression, to produce their own needs and retain foodgrains within their sub-division and not allow them to be exported. They raised a large army of volunteers numbering three thousand in course of one month. The number soon rose to five thousand and included some women. Several camps were started to train them. Large sums of money, paddy and rice were collected. The whole population was thus carefully trained and kept alert and organized. They formed local relief committees which ran six dole centres, six canteens, four Satkar Samities, fifteen medical relief centres, of which 12 are still running, four milk canteens, 12 seed distributing centres, four paddy husking centres, one oil-pressing *ghani* wherefrom 30 maunds of cotton seeds were distributed, 400 mds. of cotton were sold to 3500 spinners for themselves and their families from three khadi centres. Besides this at a Khadi centre 4000 spinners had worked their charkhas and taken half the yarn spun as labour charges. The majority of these spinners were women. For the spread of Hindi language a school was opened where a few men and women were first given lessons and these people then acted as teachers in five centres opened in one particular sub-division.

A National Government with a dictator who was to act within the limits laid down by the Congress Committee was formed. He was aided by ministers in charge of Law and Order, Health, Education, Justice, Agriculture and Propaganda. They ran their own postal system. Dacoits and thieves who had been let loose to play disorder were arrested and dealt with according to law. Volunteers were formed into an army with a G.O.C. and a commandant. It consisted of a fighting branch, an intelligence branch and an ambulance with well-

trained doctors, compounders, stretcher-bearers and nurses. The National Government who did all these things functioned from December 17, 1942 to August 8, 1944. It was dissolved owing to Gandhiji's press statements of the 29th July and the 6th of August 1944 calling off the movement and asking the leaders to surrender. There is no doubt that the achievements were marred by occasional acts of violence perpetrated against those who were suspected of acting in collusion with the Government.

A brief review of the incidents that happened in the various sub-divisions and villages in Midnapore the details of which are given below will give a clear perspective as to the intensity of the movement carried on by the people as well as of the degree of repression, arson, loot, rape, and torture carried on by the military in league with the Government.

Midnapore was declared an emergency area for fear of Japanese invasion. Most of the motor buses plying in the sub-division of Tamluk were removed. The rest which were left had a ludicrously low amount of petroleum allotted to them. The panicky authorities callously disregarded the interests of the people who were put to endless sufferings for want of the buses. Then came another order in April 1942. The irresponsible authorities wanted the removal of all types of boats, lest the Japanese should use them. The district magistrate issued an order that all types of boats of the entire Contai sub-division and Nandigram and Moyna Police stations must be removed within three hours to certain places the distance of which varied from 30 to 90 miles from the prescribed area. This impossible order could not be executed. It only opened an avenue of bribery to the corrupt officials. Hundreds of boats were burnt and destroyed and thousands of rupees worth of valuable property wantonly destroyed. This cruel act, we do not know what purpose it served to the Government, only deprived innumerable people of their only means of subsistence. The compensation from the Government was in most cases nominal, and there were cases where no compensation whatsoever had been paid.

The first police firing on villagers happened on 8th September, 1942, when they tried to stop export of rice from the villages.

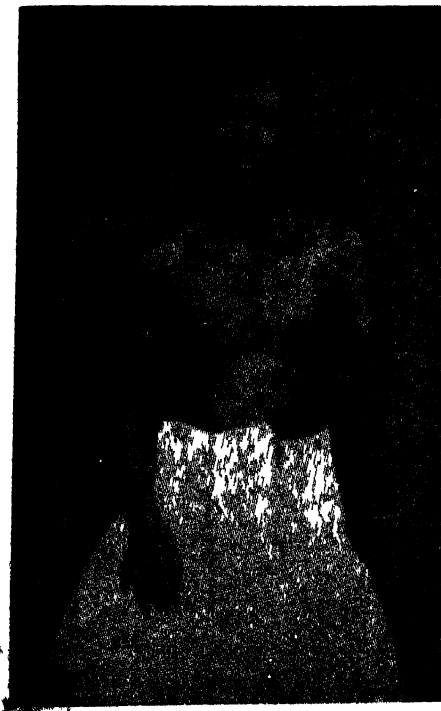
What with the denial policy of the Government, what with exportation of rice and what with police firing, the sub-division along with other parts of the district was a vast powder magazine which could be set ablaze any time by a match-stick. The 'Quit India' resolution acted as that stick. Hartal was observed on many occasions specially on the arrest of Mahatmaji and other local leaders. The students of the sub-division went on strike. Many schools had been closed for indefinite period as their school buildings had been requisitioned for military purposes and kept in occupation for a long time.

Realizing the evils of the censor and apprehending the breakdown of the Government, the people of the district evolved out a postal system of their own having branches all over the sub-division. The law courts were for the most part empty and the registration offices were boycotted.

It was decided in a meeting of the workers held on the 27th September 1942 that there were simultaneous attacks on the police stations, courts and other Government centres. On the night of the 28th September, big trees were felled to block the important roads of Tamluk to Pauchkura, Tamluk to Mahisadal, Tamluk to Narghat. Thirty culverts were broken, 27 miles of telegraph and telephone lines were cut out and 194 telegraph posts were broken. Three police stations of Tamluk sub-divisions were simultaneously attacked on that day and Nandigram police station on the next day. All the killed and wounded including Hindus and Mussalmans received bullets on the front part of the bodies. As previously settled by the people five big processions approached the town of Tamluk from different directions. As they approached the police station the sepoys under the command of S. J. Mouindra Nath Banerjee, police officer, made a strong lathi charge, which could not deter the processionists from proceeding to capture the thana. The gathering was indiscriminately fired.



•  
UP Gandhi Kutir—Mahisadal  
( Midnapore ) where  
Mahatmaji taking rest in  
the front of the Cottage at  
the time of his past tour to  
Midnapur Above photo  
was taken by Kanu  
Gandhi



Side Hero Birendra Nath  
Maji Who was wounded  
by bullet with Sm Matangini  
Hazra—at Banpukur in  
Tamluk firing. He was  
also convicted for 12 months  
R. I.





at and being unable to stand the rain of bullets the crowd dispersed. But a few revolutionaries ignoring the bullets rushed to the thana. The soldiers with their rifles went on firing from the thana building. One of the brave revolutionaries was hit and killed instantaneously, the rest had to withdraw. The wounded were attended by their comrades and many were taken to the Ramkrishna Seva Asram, but the soldiers snatched away one of them named S. Ramchandra Berah and dragged him by the legs across the road. He was left in front of the thana premises with bleeding wounds all over his body. When Ramchandra regained his consciousness he forgot his wound and somehow managed to drag his bullet-riddled body upto the outer door of the thana. His face lit up with the joy of victory. He cried aloud, 'Here I am, the Thana is captured'. With these words he breathed his last.

Without a brief reference to the part played by S. Matangini Hazra aged 73 the history of the August uprising in the Tamluk sub-division would not be complete. The processionists also had the same end in view—the capture of the Thana. They encountered the soldiers under the command of S. Anil Kumar Bhattacharya. They had to withdraw to some distance on being attacked by the soldiers. One boy named Luxmi Narayan Das came to the forefront, ran into the rank of soldiers and seized a gun. He was mercilessly beaten by the soldiers. But nothing could daunt them. When these soldiers of freedom led by S. Matangini Hazra again encountered the Government troops who opened fire and continued showering bullets for a long time, S. Matangini held the national flag firmly in her hands and advanced. The Government troops first hit her on both hands, her hands dropped but not the national flag which she held tightly and advanced, requesting Indian troops to cease firing, giving their jobs up and join the freedom movement. Only a bullet she received in reply which ran right through her forehead and she fell dead. As she lay in the dust sanctified by her blood, the national flag was still in her grip yet flying unsullied. A soldier ran and kicked the flag to the ground. A

few steps behind her lay scattered the dead bodies of Laxmi Narayan Das (13), Puri Madhab Pramanik (14), Nagendra Nath Samanta and Jiban Chandra Bera. Lots of people were wounded, some of them were carried to the Government hospital for treatment. Here also the soldiers prevented the people from giving first aid to the wounded. A woman was attending a wounded revolutionary who was crying for water. The woman went to the neighbouring tank, dipped the end of her *sari* into the water and thus brought water for the wounded. A soldier aimed his gun at her and asked her to stop giving water. The woman cried out, 'You may kill me, I am not going to yield to your threat'. The soldier did not dare shoot her.

From the south-western direction of the sub-division a procession consisting of 3000 persons entered the town by the wooden bridge. S. Apurba Ghose who was the leader of the military group there, called out to the processionists,—'those of you who can face bullets and sure death should come out'. One of those revolutionaries was a woman who first advanced with a firm determination. They were cleverly arrested and then a lathi charge was made on the procession. The arrested revolutionaries were given a serious beating and then left off excepting seven, which number included the woman. They were sentenced to two years R. I. each.

From the west a procession of about 1000 people approached the Thana. They were subjected to a lathi charge and made to disperse.

In this manner about 20 thousand people all unarmed and nonviolent, braved the hordes of Government forces. Even when they had to withdraw before the continuous showers of bullets about 10,000 of them waited patiently till late at night for an opportunity to renew their attack. But as Government forces continuously poured into the town which was very carefully guarded, the people gradually withdrew. The relatives of the killed approached the government for the dead bodies but they were insulted and driven away. For several days after this incident the town was completely boycotted by sellers of vegetables, fish, milk etc.

At Mahishadal the police opened indiscriminate firing on the unarmed people. On the 29th September 1942, different unions organised processions. A procession of about five thousand people was advancing towards the thana from the eastern side. The O. C. of Mahishadal P. S. confronted them with a peon known as "G. Sahib" who was the body guard of a local zamindar. "G. Sahib" opened fire and shot at random killing two and wounding about 18 persons. The procession withdrew to a distance.

We have said before that the sub-division along with other parts of the district was a vast powder magazine. The "Quit India" resolution and the arrest of the leaders only added a spark to it. The ruthless policy of repression of the authorities prepared the field for action. An unjust Cess Revaluation was made in the teeth of opposition of the people. All meetings and processions were under ban. Public opinion was sought to be stifled. Prices were soaring to great heights, War bonds were being sold by the exercise of undue influence and coercion, among all sections of people, the poor and the rich, the school teacher, the pleader, the shop-keeper, the boatman, the poor ploughman—all were equally subjected to pressure to purchase war bonds and to subscribe to war funds. The sub-division had been deprived of the normal means of conveyance—boats, bicycles and buses had been taken away. The inevitable famine, engineered and wrought up by a dangerous policy, was already casting its gloomy shadow over the sub-division. All these served to accentuate the bitter feelings against the British rule and people every day grew stronger in their determination to end the foreign order and achieve freedom.

Innumerable meetings were held. Topics discussed related to the war situation, Bombay Resolution, and non-violent revolution. The meetings and processions consisted of 5 to 10 thousand people. Hindu and Mahomedan processionists held demonstrations before the Law Courts, Government Offices and Police stations and in the huge public meetings held in front of these places, war was declared against the British raj and each thana was declared independent. Congress

volunteers used to conduct these meetings and processions which were always peaceful. In Mahishadal thana a band of national volunteers in uniform used to lead the processions. When a meeting of 20,000 people held before Mahishadal Police Station, declared its resolution of Independence, Mr Shaikh I. C. S., the S. D. O. of Tamluk, was there with some constables. He ordered the arrest of four speakers but the crowd refused to let them have arrested. Mr Shaikh asked the constables to make a lathi charge. The constables, however, did not move and Mr Shaikh, dumbfounded, withdrew rapidly with his constables.

People were asked to boycott all Government offices. The Law courts were for the most part empty, and had little work to do. The Registration offices were also boycotted. The Midnapore District Board and the Local Boards of the district had been specially subjected to Government wrath, because these had been successfully captured and made the best use of by the Congress candidates. In 1930 with the start of C. D. movement these bodies had been superseded. Practically till 1943, these bodies continued to be controlled by officials and non-representative elements. In the 1940 election again the Congress candidates were returned to these bodies. Many Union Boards also were under Congress control. When fight started, the members stopped collecting Union rates and cut off all connections with the circle officers. The uniforms of Chowkidars and Dafadars were collected and burnt. The Union Boards which did not co-operate were occupied by Congress people and the papers destroyed. About a lakh of people, both Hindus and Muslims, participated in the fight for capturing police stations, courts and other Government centres.

The Vidyut Bahini ( Lightning Corps ) was first formed at Mahishadal ; later Tamluk and Nandigram Thanas also organised their own Vidyut Bahinis. In each Vidyut Bahini there was one G. O. C., one Commandant. It had the following divisions :

(i) Fighting Branch, (ii) Intelligence Branch, (iii) Ambulance Corps. There were well-trained doctors, compoun-

ders, stretcher-bearers and nurses. The Vidyut Bahini was recognised as the National Army by the Jatiya Sarkar ( the national government ). The following branches were later on opened : (i) Guerrila Detachment, (ii) Sisters' Army, (iii) Law and Order. This last named department did noteworthy works in arresting notorious dacoits and thieves who had been let loose to create disorder. These dacoits and thieves were produced before the Court of the Jatiya Sarkar and dealt with according to law.

The women of Mahishadal had to face the worst repression from the Government. Certain men under the employ of the British Government committed rape on 74 women of this sub-division. One of the victims, was pregnant for some months at that time. One woman victim died as a result of this brutal assault. Innumerable attempts to commit rape were made ; in some cases the women managed to escape and save themselves. In most cases the women used to stay in batches and offer united resistance to the attempts of brutes to molest them. This step proved effective in many cases ; the women were given daggers for their protection. The mere show of the sharp and shining daggers was, in most cases, enough to put the beasts to their flight. On January 9, 1943—600 soldiers surrounded three villages namely, Masuria, Dilmasuria, and Chandipur in Mahishadal thana. They raided the houses. Not content with plundering and pillaging the villagers they committed criminal assaults on 46 women in course of one single day. Even some small children were equally tortured, particularly when the troops were disappointed in their attempt to arrest anybody. After their raids on houses they used to cruelly beat the little children whom they could catch hold of.

Tortures, inhuman, filthy and obscene in various ways, had been perpetrated by the mercenaries of the Government. Men were tortured in hundreds of villages, people were made to walk long distances, kept without food and then released. In chilly winter nights men had been dipped in the cold water of tanks, in some cases men had been made naked and buckets of cold

water poured on their bodies, numerous men had been cruelly beaten till they became senseless. Manmatha Naskar (village Ramnagar, Police Station Sutahata) and Sudhir Das (village Hatibaria, P. S. Sutahata) had been so severely beaten that blood came out of their urinary channels. A European officer devised a new mode of torture. Besides cruelly beating men till they fell down senseless he used to insert a wooden rule inside the rectum and turned it round to cause insufferable pain to the immense glee of that man.

While Ministers of the Bengal Government visited Mahishadal at the time to see to the relief measures that had to be taken, they saw with their own eyes houses being set on fire by the agents of law and order after nightfall. They heard the stories of rape and assault from the lips of victims themselves. With the resignation of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and ultimately the forced quitting of office by the Huq Ministry, whatever restraint there might have been on the overzealous officers in the district was removed and the promise of an official enquiry without delay from Mr A. K. Fazlul Haque made on the floor of the Bengal Assembly into the acts of atrocities committed by the agents of the Government was never fulfilled, so that the guilt of those who committed these atrocities, arson, loot, night raids, torture and rape on a mass scale like various others guilts perpetrated by the British bureaucrats on the helpless people both during and after, yet remains unfixed officially.

## CONTAI

On the eve of the memorable meeting of the A. I. C. C. at Bombay the Contai Sub-Divisional Congress Committee met at Contai on August 6, 1942. The next day Congress workers went out into mofussil to propagate the ideas contained in the resolution of the Working Committee.

The news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other All-India leaders just after the close of the A. I. C. C. meeting having reached the workers in the mofussil, a hartal was

observed in protest on August 14 in police stations of Patashpore, Bhagawanpore and Khejuri.

Students of the Contai Pravat Kumar College and local High English Schools including the local Girls' H. E. School went on strike and held procession in the town. On August 16, a condolence meeting was held to mourn the sad and sudden demise of Sri Mahadev Desai during his detention in the Aga Khan Palace Camp.

On August 20, Contai observed the most successful hartal as a protest against the arrest and detention of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders.

Next morning S. J. Nikunja Behari Maity, M. L. A. President of the Contai Subdivisional Congress Committee, Sri Rashbehari Pal, Congress Secretary, and Sri Iswar Chandra Mal, M. L. A. were arrested and detained. Sri Bepin Behari Adhikari, pleader, Sri Sudhir Chandra Dass and Sri Subodh Gopal Guchhait, a student, all prominent Congress workers, were arrested and later on convicted.

On August 23, another successful hartal was observed as a protest against the arrest of the local leaders after which some students and teachers were arrested and sentenced to two years R. I. On August 28, the offices of the Contai Subdivisional Congress Committee were raided, papers seized and volunteers arrested.

In order to enthuse the people and to explain the working programme of fight for independence to the masses, hundreds of public meetings were held and hundreds of processions paraded almost all the villages of the sub-division. About 8,000 people enlisted themselves as volunteers and many camps, at least one in each Union were started to organise the thanas. The organisation was so extensive that no village of the sub-division was left untouched. Great enthusiasm prevailed all over the sub-division.

The police did not dare attend most of the meetings. Where they attended they did not dare arrest any speaker. As a result, all the primary and middle English schools in the sub-division were closed. High English schools and the



Contai Provat Kumar College became deserted. Many students of the College and Schools joined the movement as volunteers. Sri Birendranath Mal, a graduate teacher of the Haludbari H. E. School, Sri Krishna Kumar Chakraborty, Kavyatirtha (killed in the Bhagwanpore firing), Head Pandit of the Bhimeswari Middle English School and another teacher and many others resigned their posts and joined the movement.

On September 14, twenty processions consisting of about 10,000 persons from all quarters of the mofussil, entered the Contai town all at a time just at 3 p.m. through eight main roads. This was very striking to the public and created great enthusiasm and sensation all over the sub-division. Government officers became all overawed and tried to protect the officers by promptly closing the doors. The police gave no obstruction to the movement of the processionists. Picketing and strike continued in the Contai Provat Kumar College and some of the High English schools. The police arrested about 40 picketers at the High School gate. At Egra after picketing had been over, shopkeepers were severely assaulted by the police. As a result of this picketting the college and schools were closed.

The S. D. O. arranged a dance on September 6 in aid of the War Fund. Volunteers paraded the town requesting the people not to attend the dance. The processionists were at once arrested of whom three were convicted and others were set at liberty. The volunteer picketing at the gates were severely assaulted and arrested. Of the arrested, four were sent up for trial and convicted while others were taken to Bhaigorh at a distance of 10 miles at dead of night, kept without food for hours together and set at liberty there.

To organise boycott of Government offices and specially law courts attempts were made to stop holding of daily and bi-weekly bazars and huts in the Contai town and in market places lying on District Board roads. Vendors of vegetables, rice, fish, milk etc., were requested not to come to the sub-divisional town. This boycott was started with the hartal of August 20 and was so completely acted upon that not a

single vendor was seen at the Contai Bazar except permanent shopkeepers who also stopped bringing goods from Calcutta and elsewhere for the time being. As a result the town became almost deserted for about three weeks.

The authorities seized foodstuffs from the houses of some of the well-to-do persons of the locality under the D. I. Rules. The people tried to get provisions from mofussil places wherever available. Muktears of local criminal court resolved not to accept any new case any more.

During the second week of September attempts were made to cut off the link between villages and government police stations by the resignation of chowkidars and dafadars. As a result of this propaganda many chowkidars and dafadars voluntarily resigned from their services ; some were forced to resign, others did not attend the police station.

On September 20, a batch of 11 volunteers was put under arrest at Pichhabani. A crowd surrounded the police and demanded the release of the volunteers. The sight of the crowd forced the police to release the volunteers. Following this, a police raid on the local volunteer camp was apprehended and a cut was made on the Contai-Ramnagar D. B. Road at Sarisaberia (Mahisaghot) at a distance of four miles from Contai town.

On September 22, the S. D. O. and S. D. P. O. with a batch of armed constables went to the locality, surrounded a number of houses in the neighbouring villages, and forced the villagers to fill up the cut. At the sight of the police the female inmates of some houses shut the doors which were broken open by the police though there were no male members.

The people assembled near the cut to protest against the forcible employment of their co-villagers for repairs. D. B. Overseer having promised to pay the wages for this work and to allow them to go, the crowd began to disperse. At that time there was a heavy shower of rains and the people took shelter under the trees on banks of Mahisaghot tank at a distance of about a furlong from the cut.

In the meantime the police was reinforced from the sub-divisional headquarters. On arrival of reinforcement the S. D. O. with the armed force hurriedly walked up from the cut to warn the people and wanted to speak with some of them. As soon as some of the crowd approached the S. D. O., a severe lathi charge began. At this the people paced backward but were attacked with brickbats by the police to which the people retaliated with brickbats.

The police then fired 35 rounds—as a result of the lathi charge and firing about 24 persons were injured of whom some wanted water. One boy proceeding to give water received a bayonet charge.

The police dragged three wounded persons by holding their legs from the bank of Mahisaghot tank (the place of firing) to the cut where a motor truck was waiting, and then took them to the Contai town in the truck. On the way two of the wounded persons succumbed to the injuries and the third died in the hospital. Out of the wounded admitted into the hospital the next morning one succumbed to death, the total number of death being six.

On September 20, early in the morning, an armed force headed by the S. D. O., and the S. D. P. O., raided the volunteers' camp at Gopinathpore in P. S. Bhagwanpore. They assaulted and arrested about 40 volunteers and began to take them to the thana. At Dhantala the police was faced with a crowd of about 10,000 who demanded the release of the volunteers. A severe lathi charge was made on the crowd by the police but on account of their persistent demand the police was forced to release the volunteers except 11 who were taken to the thana. The police was followed by a crowd of 1000 up to the thana where the S. D. O. having promised to release the remaining volunteers on dispersal of the crowd and the crowd having been requested by the Congress Secretary, they left the place. But the S. D. O. did not keep his promise. The dissatisfied mob destroyed the motor launch and the boats of the S. D. O.

The police searched the office of the Contai Sub-divi-

sional Congress Committee, the Contai National School, the All India Spinners Association, Contai Branch, and a stationery shop named "Kanthi Silpa Bhandar", on September 20, destroyed the articles including hand made cloths of the A. I. S. A. (Contai branch), seized all the papers and articles of the Congress office, arrested the volunteers and locked up the office.

The volunteers broke open the door and tried to stay there, but the office was again locked up by the police. Then, it was again broken open by the volunteers, and it remained open till October 6, when the Congress house was burnt, and the owner of the house, Sri Gāstha Behari Dey was arrested.

On September 27, a batch of armed police of about 35, raided the Volunteers' Camp at Chandanpore in P. S. Contai, belaboured the volunteers mercilessly and threw them into the neighbouring pond with their hands bound.

The party then marched towards Belbani in P. S. Ramnagar, raided the Volunteers' Camp on Sand Hill, assaulted the volunteers sleeping there and burnt down all the articles of the camp on September 27. The party then began to enter the village and was faced by a crowd.

The police opened fire to disperse the crowd. As a result of this firing three persons died on the spot and about 14 persons were wounded. The police then having returned from within the village was again faced with another crowd near the Volunteer's Camp and again fired to disperse the crowd. Here also two persons died an instantaneous death and many persons were wounded, the total number of the wounded coming up to 60.

The police left the place with the dead bodies of the first three persons and three wounded persons but did not take the last two dead persons. Some wounded persons died in the hospital, the total number of death being 10.

On September 29, the Patashpore police station was raided. During the work of destruction of properties in the Patashpore thana the officer-in-charge fled away and the four constables were at once disarmed, put under arrest and when destruction was complete they were set free.

All the records and furniture of the office were burnt. The thatched portion of the thana building was burnt while the roof of the pucca portion was damaged. The records including stamps, postcards and envelopes of all the seven post offices were burnt.

All the records and documents of the Patashpore Sub-Registry Office were burnt. Records and documents of one Debt Settlement Board, six Union Boards, and eight Panchayet Unions were also burnt.

The opium records and furniture of Patashpore and Mangalamaro excise shops, the four Dak Bungalows at Argoal, Amgachia, Gokulpore and Gopalpore having pucca walls and thatched roof had been completely destroyed.

The uniforms of all the dafadars and chowkidars had been burnt. Twenty pucca culverts on Egra-Bazkul and Latat-Janka roads were destroyed. Thirty cuts were made on Egra-Bazkul and Latat-Janka roads. The papers and records of only one Khasmahal Tahasildar were burnt.

One postal overseer was arrested and set free next day.

The Khejuri police station was also raided. The Khasmahal Sub-Manager was put under arrest and set at liberty after three days. During his detention he was provided with all amenities and was let off with passage money, and necessary clothings. The papers of the jute office was also burnt. The cheques and records of eight Tahasildars of the Khasmahal were taken possession of from their houses and burnt. The Dak Bungalows at Rasulpore, Kamarda and Beerbandar were destroyed. Records of post offices at Henria, Haludbari, Kalagachhia, Ajaya, Janka and Khejuri were burnt, and all the telegraph posts within the Thana area were removed. The Toll office with all its connected quarters at Kalinagar were destroyed. The Sub-Overseer's Office at Kalinagar was also burnt. The P. W. bridge at Palabania was burnt. The ferry boats at Eranchi and Talla were destroyed and that of Chingurdana was put under Congress control. The thana buildings and all the quarters of the officers and constables were burnt, and walls were destroyed.

The Pucca portion of the Khasmahal office was destroyed and the thatched portions were burnt.

Three boats one of which carrying 800 units of kerosene worth Rs. 5,000/- another carrying dal, sugar, ghee, atta, flour, spices, condensed milk tins worth about Rs. 9,000/- for supply to Government officers, police and military were totally burnt. After all these happenings Circle Officer, Khejuri and Bhagwanpore with 11 armed constables went to Khejuri. But they were on their way arrested, disarmed and kept in the Congress detention camp under Congress control for 10 days till they were set free, after being taken to the Sundarbans. They were kindly treated and given passage money, the eleven guns that were seized on this occasion were subsequently returned to the Government.

On September 29, about 20,000 people went to raid the Bhagwanpore police station; the police station was well guarded with barbed wire-fencing with one gate. As soon as the procession reached the Thana gate the manager of the Contai Khasmahal and the second officer of the Bhagwanpore police station opened fire on the processionists resulting in death of 13 persons on the spot and injury to 90 persons. S. Bibhuti Bhusan Das lived about 30 hours after he was shot. He was kept in the Thana hazat without any food, water and medical treatment. S. Krishna Kumar Chakrabarty, Kabya-tirtha who had resigned his post in Bhimeswari M. E. School and joined the movement was shot at, while he was giving water to a wounded person and he fell into the pond and his deadbody floated over the water next day. Paresh Chandra Jana died in Birbandh Hospital and Dharendra Nath Dalapat died in the Thana hazat. In all 16 persons died in the Thana raid.

On October 1, five post offices, one telegraph office, the sub-registry office, jute office, rural reconstruction office and dak bungalow at Moral, Udbadal and P. W. Dak bungalow at Uttarbar and Pousi were burnt. Records and furniture of the Sanitary Inspector's office, Union Board office and Rural Reconstruction office were also burnt. Telegraph wires were cut and posts removed.

On September 30, in the afternoon the District Magistrate and S. D. O., with an armed force, forced the students and the passers-by to load a motor truck with bricks and started to Marisda to repair the cut there. On their way they forcibly took some persons in their truck. It became dark when the repair work was still going on and the newly built Marisda U.P. school was set on fire by the police for illuminating the place so that the repair work might go on even when the light failed. The next day on October 1, a batch of soldiers went to the locality, set fire to 25 houses of innocent villagers of Marisda, mercilessly beat an old man, named Bhojo Mohan Jana, filled up the cuts and marched towards Bhaidgorh. On their way they destroyed articles and goods of many shops. At Bhaidgorh station the soldiers opened fire to disperse the mob causing two deaths; one of such persons died instantaneously and another was struggling when one of the soldiers kicked him to death.

The spontaneous outburst and anger of the people took shape in the form of the burning of post offices, cutting of wires and telegraph lines throughout the sub-division of Contai. A detailed account of repressive measures resorted to by the police and the military is given below.

The District authorities took unprecedented repressive measures throughout the sub-division. Practically speaking the people of the entire sub-division were subjected to military rule. The sub-divisional Magistrate warned the people by issuing printed notice that any person attempting to damage the road, telegraph lines or the ferry ghat would at once be shot at. Notwithstanding this order the excited people destroyed the ferry boats, damaged the roads and the telegraph lines. The S. D. O. promulgated orders under D.I. Rule 53, read with notification number 9478-E dated the 11th December 1941 that no persons except Government officers, District Board employees, Ijaradars at Ferry Ghats, and M. B. doctors should remain outside of his house from 8 P.M. to 4 A.M. He also promulgated orders under D. I. Rules prohibiting assemblies of more than 4 persons at one place, carrying lathi, iron materials with them

and blowing of conch shells except on religious festivals all over the sub-division from 27th September to 28th December 1942.

From October 1, about 500 military were posted all over the sub-division and were divided into 12 camps. Every day aeroplanes patrolled all over the sub-division. In order to terrorise the people in the sub-division the district authorities adopted the most reprehensible policy of looting and house-burning, not only of Congress volunteers, but also educational institutions in broad daylight in presence of civil officers. One cannot imagine that the Government should stoop down so low to choke the spirit of nationalism and independence amongst the politically conscious people of Contai. Everywhere the soldiers were divided into batches and each batch with some civil and police officers and some constables used to start in different directions, entered villages, set fire to houses, specially those belonging to Congress supporters and stayed near the houses so long as it did not completely burnt down. Low flying aeroplanes used to patrol over burning houses to terrorise the people so that they might not come near to extinguish the fire.

During such house burnings and searches looting of cash money, ornaments and other valuables in presence of responsible officers were carried out by the police and the military. Hundreds of maunds' of paddy were burnt in many villages. It has been ascertained that about 766 houses in different villages in the sub-division were burnt. The terror of the villagers may be imagined from the fact that when a police party started towards some direction, the people both male and female in that area used to leave their houses, go into the paddy fields and stayed there so long as the police did not leave the villages. If a police party reached a village at about 11 A.M. the people used to leave their houses with cooked rice and plaintain leaves and take their mid-day meals on *bunds* in the paddy fields or on the sides of tanks.

The number of people being dragged (both male and female) to surrender all their belongings in cash and kind is legion. The idea of general rebellion so pervaded the minds



of the officials that they could not but always think in terms of suppressing the spirit of this uprising by any method they could think of. They treated the people with scant respect and never cared about their position. True, in the method of meeting out tortures they followed the principles of equal treatment in every case high or low. Hundreds of cases were reported of which the following one will suffice as an instance in point. After the destructive activities in the Khejuri P. S. the special officer called the respectable persons of the locality to pay the Chowkidari tax personally. On their arrival they were surrounded by armed soldiers and were ordered on pain of gun shot to rub their nose against the ground for a length of yards previously marked by him. Instances of whipping, molestations and rough handlings were not wanting. People were filthily abused and mercilessly beaten. To crown all these repressive measures came the raping of women. Sometimes, entire village or some isolated houses were surrounded by the police or military and the male members were arrested or forcibly removed and women were outraged and raped. 228 cases of rape and outrages on women have so far been reported. Details of this savagery beggar all imaginable descriptions. Sometimes a single woman was raped by three or more soldiers one after another. Even a mother with a 19-day old baby was not spared. But the smallest resistance on the part of the victims was retaliated with assaults by the butt ends of guns and kicks. There was a case of stabbing also under similar circumstances.

### **SADAR SUB-DIVISION (MIDNAPORE).**

Sj. Charu Chandra Mahanti the President and Sj. Nagendra Sen, the Secretary of the Sub-divisional Congress Committee and six other prominent Congress workers namely Sj. Bepin Behari Dey, Sj. Nani Bhusan Dey, Sj. Ram Narayan Chakravarty, President Panchait, Union No. 10 of Debra Thana, Sj. Rajendra Samanta, Sj. Ashutosh De, Sjkta Nani Bala Maity were arrested on the 14th August, 1942 on a

charge of holding public meetings, when they had been preparing the field and went out in the villages to propagate the ideas contained in the resolutions of A. I. C. C. meeting of the 8th August 1942. The 1942 movement began throughout the sub-division by the declaration of hartals in protest of the arrest of the revered Congress leaders including Mahatma Gandhi and others. All the schools were boycotted by the students. Innumerable processions and meetings were held to propagate the Working Committee programme and to prepare them for the fight for Independence. Even some chowkidars voluntarily resigned from their posts.

In course of one month from the beginning of the movement not less than 22 workers were made security prisoners. Then began indiscriminate arrests of workers and villagers both under D. I. R. and I. P. C. In Keshpore Thana, where the movement was more vigorous than in other places more than 200 arrests were made. They were kept as under trial prisoners for more than a year out of whom 50 persons were convicted to different terms of imprisonment. Among the convicts Sj. Harendra Nath Mitra, Dr. Sarasi Chowdhuri and others are still serving their terms of imprisonment. The bad behaviour of the jail authorities, the worthless and insufficient diet and the long under trial period undermined their health and energy beyond repair. About 110 workers of the whole sub-division were convicted under different terms of imprisonment and some of them are still confined behind the prison bars. The Government also declared the Congress Committees illegal. The seven Thana Congress Committees (Debra, Pingla, Sabong, Keshpore, Garbetta, Kharagpore, Midnapore town) came under their ban.

People were determined not to submit to these repression with docility. In the village Khetua of Keshpore Thana, people assembled in the month of October 1942 to snatch away the arrested congress workers. They not only snatched the arrested Congress workers away but also persuaded the police to give up their uniforms and rifles, yet no violence was committed upon the police. In the same

month of October the Sub-registrar's office at Anandapore of the same Thana was attacked by the mob and burnt. The police force reached the place of occurrence after the mob dispersed. Subsequently the police with 250 soldiers went to arrest the leaders of the movement. People assembled and resisted non-violently. The soldiers fired on the gathering and one died on the spot seven others were injured ; but the crowd again assembled and the police again opened fire, this time killing two and inflicting injury on two persons. The soldiers burnt down one house, looted one shop and three houses in the village. The police and the soldiers next began to surround many villages in order to arrest the warranted persons and on that plea they assaulted the villagers of Khetua under the Keshpore Thana. In the morning when the villagers returned to their respective houses the soldiers began to fire on those villagers without any warning. One woman and two boys aged 4 and 15 years respectively died on the spot (October 1942). Then they entered the neighbouring villages, searched the houses and beat the villagers but found no congress workers there. Still they arrested 100 persons. A significant fact was that no Indian soldier took part in these repressions, these being committed by the Scotch soldiers.

The Mohanpore Post Office in Mohanpore Thana, Jara Military Camp, Pirakata Dak Bungalow in Salboni P. S. were burnt by the people in reprisal.

In the Sobong Thana a large procession was led by S. Bijoy Krishna Bhakta and S. Kedar Pramanik towards Thana headquarters. It was stopped quite close to the Thana and many others with the above two gentlemen were arrested. In the Pingla P. S. people under the leadership of local congress leaders led a large procession. The police charged the processionists with lathis. Several of them were injured and nearly 12 of these injured persons were sent to the Midnapore Central Jail.

Some rich man of Ballichak had shown sympathy towards the police but in retaliation the people boycotted the Ballichak by-weekly market which is a big local trading centre.

This boycott continued for nearly two months ; after which the local Government officers gave a false declaration that a compromise had been brought about between them and the Debra Thana Congress Committee. This was, indeed a foul design to deceive the people.

The police accompanied by soldiers burnt the office of Debra Thana Congress Committee, situated at Aloke-kendra in the village of Abantipore, a centre of constructive Congress activities where attempts were being made to implant the constructive programme formulated by Mahatma Gandhi.

It is to be specially noted that these repressions, were committed in the wake of the ruins which the terrible cyclone left as a legacy. The heavy cyclone, the unprecedented famine which began earlier in the district of Midnapore than elsewhere, the all-round repression of the police and the military—these make up the tale of woe of the soldiers of freedom of Midnapore. A look at the almanac below will convince what price the people of this sub-division paid for their desire to be free.

*Freedom's Almanac—*

Death by firing—7. (Including dead in Hospital).

Death in Jail—2. (Pramoda Chakravarty and

Narendra Nath Mondal).

House burnt by the police and soldiers—6.

Looting—5. (Houses 4 & Shop 1).

Security prisoner—32.

Convicted prisoner—110.

Undertrial prisoner—400.

## CALCUTTA

What happened in Calcutta on August 14 and the following days were unprecedented and the movement carried on in Calcutta was something very different from that which occurred during the non-cooperation movement of 1921 and the two Satyagraha Movements of 1930 and 1932. The scenes witnessed during the days of 1942 remind one of the

descriptions of the French Revolution in the immortal works of Victor Hugo. The people had risen,—not a section or class of people but the whole people including boys and girls in their teens. Normal life came to a close. Most of the shops in Indian quarters were closed, the markets looked deserted and drear even in the busiest hour. It looked as if the whole people were on the march. It was an aggressive movement. Tram cars could not come out in the streets ; the few, which appeared under police escort, were set fire to or at least paralysed by the simple device of the cutting of the trolley rope ; the streets were barricaded with all sorts of materials that were available near at hand ; the telegraph, telephone and electric light wires were cut and brought down in tangled masses ; the police and military lorries which had to come out with the hood drawn and rifles pointed in different directions, were attacked with stones and brick bats, even the gas lamp-posts and street letter boxes were uprooted and laid on the ground. The students were on strike, so were thousands of workers in innumerable factories. Processions, big and small, went on parading the streets in defiance of the legal ban as well as the lathi charge and even firing which went on an unprecedented scale. One notable feature of the movement was the attack on European costume on the persons of Indians, specially the hat and tie. In short, everything that symbolised the authority of the British rule was attacked by an unarmed people with no better weapon than the empty hand and a breast full of determination to fight the battle to a finish. “Do or Die”—rang the new slogan of the new movement which rent the sky off and on. Louder and more persistent still rang reports of the rifle and revolver firing which was indiscriminately resorted to by the police in order to suppress what was taken to be a rebellion of the whole people. The city looked like one in a state of seige, nay, some streets in north Calcutta became the scenes of skirmishes between the people and the police and looked like a battlefield in miniature.

The impact of the popular movement in Calcutta was

great, equally great or greater were the repressive measures which were resorted to by the Government as a remedy. The Press at that time was muzzled. During the first few days only censored reports appeared in papers which the public were not disposed to believe. Later on, all the nationalist newspapers closed down as a protest against the restrictions imposed on the Press. Wild rumours thus began to spread in the city about the police atrocity specially about the number of the dead and wounded as a result of lathi charges and firing by them. So disquieting were these reports that the Chief Minister, Mr. Fazlul Huq felt called upon to issue an appeal through Syed Badruddoja to the friends and relatives of those who were killed or wounded asking them to send the names of the victims to the Secretary of the Coalition Party. It is not known how many responded to this appeal or what figure reached the Chief Minister from non-official sources. But speaking in the Bengal Legislative Assembly on February 27, 1943, the Chief Minister admitted that as many as 20 persons were killed and 152 persons injured as a result of police action in Calcutta during the second and third weeks of August 1942. One illuminating revelation, which was made by the Chief Minister in course of the interpellation was that one Mr. Pal, employed as a technical assistant of the Bengal Telephone Company, while actually engaged in repairing on, behalf of the Company, a machine which had temporarily gone out of order, was killed with a bullet wound because he was taken to be one of the disturbers of law and order. The Chief Minister also admitted that while considering the reports of cases of police firing sent to him, he "felt constrained to hold that the action in some cases was somewhat hasty".

## DACCA

Calcutta in rebellion thus had her blood bath, in full. At the same time the rest of Bengal was also having its baptism of fire. The story everywhere was more or less the same. Of the districts in East Bengal, Dacca figured more prominently in the news of those days. On August 10 the

students of many educational institutions of Dacca including those of the University, abstained from their classes. A batch of these strikers while proceeding to another high school were obstructed by the police and dispersed. On August 11 another procession of students was dispersed by the police in front of the Eden Girls' College while hartal was observed in the city. The students' strike continued the following day. On August 13 a mob raided the Munsiff's Court and set fire to the records. In course of the clash that followed fire was opened which killed one person and injured several. The police also used tear gas at these places in the city to disperse the demonstrators. Telephone and telegraph wires over the city of Dacca were also cut at several places. Simultaneously students went on strike at Narayanganj and Munshiganj where hartal was also observed by the shopkeepers. On August 14 a group of young men raided the post offices at Nawabpur, Wari, Tikatuli, Luxmibazar, Farasganj and Walter Road in Dacca town and destroyed postal records in some cases with fire. Workers of the Dhakeswari Cotton Mills, Chittaranjan Cotton Mills and Luxinarayan Cotton Mills also went on strike as a protest against the leaders' arrest. On August 15, several clashes occurred between the police assisted by the military and the public culminating in firing in more than one case. Five persons were killed and several injured. A passenger train coming from Narayanganj to Dacca, was stopped by a mob at Dayaganj. Gandaria railway station was attacked and set fire to. The railway lines were also tampered with, which resulted in the suspension of train service between Dacca and Narayanganj. The Government High School at Armanitollah, the Teachers' Training College, the Eden Girls' College and the office of the Imperial Tobacco Company were also attacked and some records thereof were destroyed. Slowly but steadily the movement began to spread in the interior of the district. On August 17 the post offices in two villages within the jurisdiction of Keraniganj Police Station were raided and burnt. The workers of several factories in the vicinity of Narayanganj brought out a procession which was forcibly

dispersed by the police. Between August 18 and September 8 the post office at Murapara in Bikrampur was raided, the excise shops at Mohanganj and Dheobhog were looted and articles thrown into water and the high school building at Malkhanagar was burnt. Extensive damage was also done to the telegraph wires throughout the Munshiganj sub-division and at several other places. Attacks were continued on excise shops, union board offices, high schools, post offices and all that symbolised authority. On September 14 a large number of persons who attempted to hold a public meeting at Taltola in Munshiganj were fired upon by the police resulting in the death of three and injury to several persons. On September 22 a big crowd of villagers while on march towards the police station of Nawabganj within the Sadar sub-division were also fired upon by the police resulting in one person being killed and several injured. Thus went on the spontaneous activities of the people accompanied by the characteristic reaction of the guardians of law and order according to the Mosaic Law of tooth for a tooth magnified according to the determined official policy of the re-establishment of authority, at any cost.

## FARIDPUR

Almost an identical story came by instalment from Faridpur. Following the arrest of the Congress leaders students came out of their respective institutions ; hartal was observed in bazars and hats, and public meetings were announced to be held in defiance of the police ban. Post offices and other similar Government buildings were raided and set fire to. The movement which started in the headquarters of the district, soon spread like wild fire into the interior and even remote villages were quickly affected. On September 6 at Faridpur town the police made a lathi charge on a crowd that attempted to hold a meeting. The Attestation Office at Radhaganj within Gopalganj sub-division was raided by the people about the same time. Lathi charge was made on a procession of boys and girls at Madaripur on September 5.



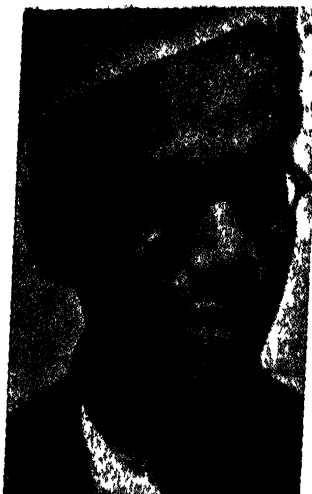
On September 7 a peaceful procession while attempting to proceed towards the Munsiff's Court at Chikandi was dispersed by the police with a lathi charge. A similar procession of students was also dispersed on the previous day at Khagra-bazar in the interior of the sub-division. How tense was the situation in the district was evident from the fact that elaborate arrangements had to be made by the police to effect the arrest of S. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, M. L. A. then an internee in a village within the jurisdiction of Noria P. S. and that the police had actually to disperse with repeated lathi charges the crowd that had surrounded the place in order to prevent the arrest of their beloved leader. On or about September 21st, the post office at Gosain Ghat in Madaripore was burnt down and a procession was attacked near Palang. The most serious disturbance in the district occurred at Bhanga when a sub-inspector of the Bhanga P. S. while attempting to disperse forcibly an unlawful assembly was killed and a constable injured in the melee that followed as a consequence. The police action that followed gave rise to such unsavoury rumours that the Chief Minister felt constrained to send a deputation of M. L. A's to Bhanga to help in easing the situation and allaying public anxiety.

## BARISAL

In Barisal too, the movement started with strikes and protest meetings of the students. Hartal was observed in Barisal town on August 17. On August 20, the crowd that attempted to prevent the export of rice from the district was dispersed by the police. The educational institutions remained closed and the student resorted to picketing at the bar library. However the demonstrators also made their way into civil court buildings and had to be dispersed by the police. An attack was made on the post office at Kalaskati and the buildings were burnt. Heavy repression went on throughout the district which did not stop even after the movement had spent itself.

Mymensingh also staged the same drama with hartal, strike,

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Dr RAMMONOHAR LOHIA



ACHUT PATAVARDHAN



ARUNA ASAF ALI



procession and public meetings. The post offices were closed by the authorities in anticipation of trouble. On August 31 the Income Tax Office, the Sales Tax Office and the Excise shops were raided by groups of demonstrators and some damage was caused. Thereafter a prohibitive order under Section 144 was issued by the District Magistrate. On September 6 another hartal was observed in the town for holding a meeting in the afternoon but the gathering was dispersed by the police. On September 11 the situation took a more serious turn when a procession organized by girl students was forcibly dispersed by the military. On September 12, the post office at Muktagachia was set on fire and partially burnt. In Tipperah District government became active whenever there was any activity on the part of the people. The Congress office at Brahmanbaria was searched by the police on August 13 and orders were served for restrictive movements of certain Congress workers in anticipation of the trouble. On August 24 a group of demonstrators raided the Income Tax Office at Comilla and destroyed the records. On September 10 the office of the Ibrahim-pore Union Board within the Chandpore sub-division was raided and burnt down. A goods train was actually derailed resulting in the dislocation of the communication lines for a while.

## NADIA

Even in Nadia the movement was inaugurated at Kusthia with a student strike followed by processions and public meetings. Girl students participated in this function along with the boys. Hartal was observed at Santipur. At Ranaghat impressive demonstrations were held and telegraph and telephone lines were cut at several places. The post office at Shyamnagar and certain adjoining villages in Nadia and Murshidabad were attacked and burnt. Four first and second class bogies of a standing train were set fire to and completely burnt at the Krishnagar railway station. At Berhampore in

Murshidabad district the excitement increased as time passed and in quick succession groups of demonstrators raided the post office at Saktipur, Phatkabari, and Rampara. The excise shop at Phatkabari was raided and also the railway stations at Beldanga and Azimgunj in the Murshidabad district. The court room of the District Judge at Berhampore was also raided on September 9 by a group of demonstrators who were promptly arrested on the spot.

## JESSORE

In Jessore over-cautious District Magistrate issued a prohibitory order banning all meetings in the district from August 9 to January 31, 1943 as soon as the A. I. C. C. had passed the famous 'Quit India' resolution. Nevertheless, students went on strike in Jessore and Naria and thereafter held processions and public meetings in defiance of the ban. On September 11 a big crowd attempted to hold a meeting in defiance of the ban and was forced to disperse by the police. On or about September 22 the railway station at Jessore was raided by the crowd who damaged one of its rooms and set fire to the records. The disturbances were marked by the first demonstration that was staged by the students on receipt of the news of the leaders' arrest. Hartal was observed in the town on August 15, a procession was taken out in the morning which swelled as it wended through the streets of the town. At about 10-30 A.M. a section of the procession entered the criminal court, the bar library, and the circuit court, smashing the glass panes and breaking furniture.

## BOGRA

In Bogra also the movement started with processions and public meetings in defiance of the police ban. Students including girls went on strike and paraded the streets in procession. The members of the Bogra bar decided unanimously to close the Bar Library for a week and not to attend court except in the cases for which dates have been

of day and processions were taken out daily. On September 11 a group of processionists including ladies entered into the Collectorate buildings and took away some papers. The Bogra Zilla school was raided and a composite first and second class bogie of a carriage was set on fire at Bhalupara railway station. Telegraphic lines between Sherpur and Chandradona was dislocated.

### MALDA

In Malda the movement started similarly in the town and spread to the interior. The Post Office, the excise shop, and the offices of the Debt Settlement Board and the Union Board within the jurisdiction of Ratan police station were raided by the people and set on fire. Similar incidents occurred also in Harish Chandrapur and Kachala. Telegraphic lines were also dislocated in several places of the district.

### DARJEELING

No district in Bengal was quiet in those days even the cool and secluded district of Darjeeling in the extreme north, was powerfully affected by the wave of nationalist awakening that was sweeping the province and it actively identified itself with the movement then in progress throughout India. Hartal was observed at Siliguri first as a protest against the leaders' arrest and again to pay homage to the memory of the late Mahadev Desai. Hartal was observed in Siliguri on September 9 when ladies also resorted to picketing. A procession was formed in the afternoon which headed by some ladies went round the city. As it approached the police station the S. D. O. ordered the processionists to disperse and on their refusal to comply ordered the police to open fire which resulted in three persons being killed and about a dozen others injured. Satyagraha was also offered by women at Kurseong and other places in the district.

## HOWRAH

In Howrah the movement followed closely in the footsteps of the movement in Calcutta with the significant addition that a large number of factory workers actively participated in it, by abstaining from work in the factories for purely political reasons. In this district also the students inaugurated the movement by coming out of their classes and organising the rest of the population. As in Calcutta the attack was directed against the tramway service. Telegraphs, telephone and lighting wires were also dismantled to a certain extent. A lathi charge was made on the demonstrators on August 17 near the Bellilios Park who were alleged to have been engaged in tampering with the telegraph wires. On September 7 a students' procession at Howrah while proceeding towards the civil court was forcibly dispersed by the police. Reports were also received of picketing by members of the public, in the premises of the court in Howrah city.

## HOOGLY

In Hooghly the movement was more comprehensive in character and embraced the factory workers in the industrial area and also the agriculturist population in the rural area. In this district also the students inaugurated the movement by suspending their studies and taking out processions in defiance of the police ban. A special feature of the movement in this district was the resignation by a number of municipal commissioners and others on the governing bodies of semi-government institutions. Hartal was observed at Serampore town, Seoraphuli, and other urban and rural areas in the district. Hartal was observed also at Chinsurah. Ten commissioners of the Hooghly Chinsurah municipality as also one commissioner of the Serampore municipality resigned as a protest against the government action. Workers of several cotton mills in Serampore area went on strike with a political

end in view and continued for weeks together. Meanwhile the movement spread into the villages on the characteristic lines. At Chanditola a number of huts erected by Government were set fire to by the people. The post office, the Khasmahal office and the Union Board office at Arambagh were raided by demonstrators and some of them were also set fire to. Telegraph wires were cut at some places near Konnagar. In this connection a clash occurred between the police and the former failing to disperse the determined crowd opened fire on them.

### BURDWAN

In Burdwan the movement appears to have assumed a more aggressive character. The news about the countrywide arrest of the leaders caused considerable excitement in the district which quickly took the shape of an aggressive nationalist movement. The students went on strike and demonstrators soon appeared on the streets. In the morning of August 17 small processions marched from different localities into the compound of Burdwan court and started picketing at the gate. As this went on for some time, the police made a lathi charge and dispersed the crowd. Congress leaders of the district were also arrested which added to the excitement of the people. A public meeting was held in the evening where it was decided to observe hartal in the town. A minor raid on the railway station was also subsequently reported. On September 13 following the arrest of the Congress leaders hartal was observed at Kalna and the post office was raided by a group of demonstrators. Another post office at Kashiara, a village, six miles to the east of Burdwan was also similarly burnt. The dak bungalow at Kalna was similarly raided and some articles of the civil court was also damaged. Kalna railway station was also set on fire. On September 16 a group of demonstrators succeeded in hoisting the Congress flag on the civil court buildings. About the same time the Canal office in village Bamania was also burnt down. The post office at Jamalpore



town in Burdwan district was also raided and set fire to. The railway station at Jamalpore, the police station and an excise shop were similarly raided. The records of the police station were burnt, another post office at Nabastha on Burdwan Kalna Road was also raided. The disturbed condition in this area continued for pretty long time.

## **BOLEPORE**

In Birbhum the most notable event took place at Bolepore. On August 29 a huge crowd consisting of Santals, Hindus and some Muslims attacked the Bolepore railway station and caused considerable damage to the railway property. The police fired on the demonstrators with the result that seven according to official version was injured.

## **DINAJPORE**

In Dinajpore an extra-ordinary event occurred at Balurghat town. For about 24 hours the British rule seemed to have come to an end. In response to an appeal issued by a local Congress leader to join a demonstration as protest against the arrest of the Congress leaders, batches of villagers began to pour into the city early in the morning on September 14. More than 5,000 people thus assembled in the town, formed the procession and then started parading the principal thoroughfares. In course of this march the demonstrators raided the post office, the civil court buildings, the sub-registry office, the central co-operative bank buildings, the union board office, two jute offices, the excise-sub-inspector's office, the railway out-agency office and several excise shop situated in different parts of the town. A section of the crowd later set fire to two of the civil court buildings, the sub-registry office, and the co-operative bank buildings as a result of which some records were burnt. Records of other offices were also seized and destroyed. Telegraph wires over the city were also cut in several places. It is noteworthy that although all these destructions went on

practically for the whole day in a town from which all vestige of governmental authority seemed to have disappeared no personal violence was committed on any government servant and nothing valuable was looted from any of the officers for the purpose of grabbing. Only persuasive appeals were addressed to government servants requesting them to give up their jobs. Private property of course was not touched in course of the event.

Government agents became active in the early morning of the following day when the district magistrate of Dinajpore accompanied by the D. S. P. and civil and military forces arrived at Balurghat. What followed can better be imagined than described. Searches, arrests, looting and firing went on with amazing thoroughness in the town. Mopping up proceeded in the rural areas. Even then the people continued to resist. At Moradanga the police party was actually overpowered and forced to retreat while some of them who were arrested by the villagers were allowed to go the next day only on their agreeing to sign the Congress pledge.

An interesting sidelight of the movement was the resistance offered by the people to all attempts by the Government agents to remove stocks of rice from the locality.

This in short is a bird's eye view of the struggle that was carried on in the year 1942 in the whole of the province of Bengal. The political history of Bengal during those days is more or less the history of Midnapore and that is why Midnapore has found a prominent place in this chapter.

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## THE PIVOT OF ORISSA POLITICAL MACHINERY



From the left :

Standing : (1) Sm. Malati Chowdhari, President, Orissa Provincial Congress Committee. (2) Uttara Chowdhari. (3) Manamohan Chowdhari, Secy. A. I. S. A., Utkal Branch. (4) Sm. Sumitra Devi. (5) Naba Krishna Chowdhari.

Sitting : (1) Sm. Rama Devi, Incharge, Kasturaba Seva Sangha. (2) 'Tinu' daughter of Malati Devi. (3) Gopebandhu Chowdhari—Constructive Leader. (4) Binayak Chowdhari.



**PART III**  
**ORISSA.**



## ORISSA.

In the wake of August movement a mad orgy of repression was let loose in the province of Orissa. Koraput of all places tasted the most terrible form of repression. The picturesque hills and dales of Koraput reverberated with the echoes of rifle firings. The traitors and reactionaries vied with one another to tighten the halter round the necks of a peaceful people.

Three hundred and forty trained Congress workers drawn chiefly from hill tribes infused a new life into the people majority of whom were simple folks of the hill tribe. An awakening unprecedented in the annals of Koraput was set afoot. The repression in the district reached its culmination in the shooting by the police at Mattili. The story of the shooting at Mattili is as follows. On August 28 a big party of about 2000 strong under the leadership of Sri Lakhman Nayak, a member of the Koraput District Congress Committee, went to the village and held a public meeting in the place for the weekly market, about half a mile from the police station. Sj. Nayak exhorted the people not to co-operate with the present Government and establish a people's raj in this country instead. The police party led by the inspector of police of Malkandgiri announced that Sj. Nayak was put under arrest because his speech was considered seditious. The people who attended the meeting followed their leader on his way to the police station. At the police station the people were asked to disperse. Surprise was sprung upon the people by simultaneous lathi charge and firing. Six persons died on the spot. About 100 people received injuries. Sj. Nayak himself was speared and bayoneted to a point of disfiguration. Many others had to share the same fate. It did not end with this unprovoked attack upon the people. It so happened that a party of estate officials, was present at the place to assist the police. A forest guard of the Jeypur State who was drunk at the time and caught in the melee fell



down in a canal near the police station built of rough stone and died of injuries on the head. One story is current that he died of injuries on the head when the crowd was charged by the police.

No body was arrested then. About 8 or 10 days after, with the arrival of the Collector and S. P. of the district, villages were ransacked in order to start a case against leading Congressmen and sympathisers. Then British Justice appeared in all pompousness to justify the police actions both on the day concerned and later ravages of the villages, and ended in conviction and sentence of hanging to Nayak and transportation for life to the others. The second story of the shooting at Pappa&hahandi is astonishing and unprovoked in its nature. In the first flush of the August movement a big gathering of about 68,000 under the leadership of congressmen of the locality were proceeding to Dabugan, a place in the centre of the Taluk in order to decide the course of action to be followed on the arrest of leaders in the country. On the narrow road with low fields on either sides, flooded with river water the huge crowd of congressmen were passing in procession shouting congress slogans. It was then the rainy season. As soon as the procession reached the bridge of the river, a police party divided into two attacked the processionists. The police party by means of a by-lane entered the procession in the middle near the bridge and divided themselves into two parties, one party stopped in the middle and began to charge lathis. The procession unable to contain itself dispersed hither and thither. The second party made its way and placed itself in front of the procession to the north. The processionists were forced to stop by being hit by guns and bayonets. Unable to proceed further the procession turned to the south. This road was narrow and the fields were inundated with flood water. The procession could not proceed being obstructed by police lorries which were purposely placed in the middle of the road. Now the unprovoked firing began. A large number had to jump into the overflowing river in order to swim across.

In this attack by the Government 19 persons died and 100 were injured. About 140 were put under arrest. In this connection a case of conspiracy was started against staunch, virile and enthusiastic congressmen among whom were Sri Lachmichandra Das and Mohadeb Pradhani and they were variously convicted and sentenced.

This district of Koraput has a unique record of having a jail, equalled only by the Belsen Concentration camp of the Nazis. Here about 50 political prisoners were callously driven to death—a fact the like of which cannot be found in any jail in our country. Humanity stood aghast when the story of the Belsen Concentration Camp was revealed. The Nazis were brutes and the Belsen was a revelation of their beastial nature. But what of those who fought the Nazis and Nazism? What of those who claimed themselves to be civilised people? Here in Orissa—a British province—in a jail in Koraput, fifty political prisoners died a lingering death, their crime being their patriotism.

The entire Koraput district is in a partially excluded area and in the Jeypur zemindary. So taking advantage of the complacency of the custodians of the law and order during August 1942, the zemindary officials did much havoc in the villages with the help of elephants, gave the villagers the worst kind of beating, committed dacoity with deadly weapons and looted all that the villagers had and also resorted to molestation of women. A boy of four years was killed in a deliberate lathi charge. Innumerable Congressmen have been stripped naked and their clothes set fire to. Should such a charge sheet fill up the quota of indictment for any average civilized Government?

## BALASORE

Like Midnapore the people of Balasore were discontented with the panicky situation created by the Government and with the arrest of their beloved leaders on the 8th of August 1942. The Government had seized cycles, ferry

boats and other conveyances. The small bridges were blown up and culverts arranged with dynamite to be blown up when necessary and all available rice within 20 miles from the sea-shore were ordered to be removed to the distant interior. All these were done with extra-ordinary haste, naturally giving rise to suspicion in the minds of the people. The British statesmen became louder and bolder in their assertion that they never feared a Japanese invasion on India and that they were never unprepared to meet the Japs in case there was such invasion at all, but their choked voice regained its shrillness only after there was a halt to the Jap advance due to the various other factors and never before. The various acts of the Government committed at the time went to prove that they really feared a landing by the Japs at Chandipore in Balasore. This feeling naturally goaded the people to rise against the Government and created in them the spirit of self-help. Men, women and youngsters of Balasore stood up as in other parts of India, like one man against the greatest provocation in the shape of the arrest of their beloved leaders. Not even all the odds and difficulties created by the so called Defence of India Rules could stop the people of Balasore from knowing what was going in other parts of the country after the arrest of the leaders and on the 15th of August they decided upon a line of action. This included burning Government papers, police stations and post offices, persuading Government servants to resign and asking students to leave their schools and colleges. When the government came to know of the programme, they made ready their machine of repression. The first act of the people to remove the vestige of the present Government found its expression in the burning of the Bhandaripokhari police station and post office on the 17th August. The Government let loose their mad and inhuman forces of repression over the people. Repressive measures reached such heights that the people of Bhandaripokhari had to leave their homes and huts and take shelter in distant places.

In Chandbali police station somehow the news was received on the 22nd August that a batch of Congress workers

were coming to burn the police station, the port office and the sub-registrar's office. Afraid of their lives, the port officer and the sub-inspector of police left their posts and boarded steam launch and steamed off to the other side of the river Baitarani. They remained there for some hours when the Congress worker Sri Purnanada Nayak arrived and explained to them that there was no danger to their lives. On this assurance only the Port officer and the S. I. came back. On the next day a meeting was held to protest against the arrest of the leaders and the port officers and the S. I. supported the resolution demanding their release and hartal was observed in hats and bazars.

At Eram police station the police resorted to firing as a result of the incident that occurred on the 28th of September 1942. Before this certain local agents were requested by Congress workers to raise the price of paddy so that this extra money could enable the peasants to purchase other necessities which had gone very high. These Mahajans did not act accordingly and the people fell upon the paddy stores of such Mahajans and took the paddy away. Anticipating such danger on himself the Eram Zemindar sought police help and on the 28th of September the police D. S. P., Shri Kunja Behari Mahanti with armed police came to Eram to arrest leading workers, Sri Kamalaproshad Kar and Sri Gouranga Ch. Mahanty. The news spread through Eram like wild fire and thousands of people assembled in the maidan in a meeting. When the people were assembling there, some chowkidars were found going that way with bedding etc. of the Police officers whom the Eram zemindar had lodged at his house. Some of the persons got hold of these beddings. At this the D. S. P. arrived with an armed force and ordered firing instantaneously even without asking the people to disperse. The victims of the firings were bayoneted too in their dying condition. The result of this thoughtless action were 28 dead and about 200 wounded.

Sri Muralidhar Panda was the leading worker in the villages, Dusuri and Lunia where the main work was the

distribution of the paddy. Sri Banamali Behera, the S. I. of police, Dhamnagar P. S. arrived in the village Katasahi to arrest Sri Panda. On hearing this, the people assembled at a place and requested the S. I. not to arrest Sri Panda. The police rather thought it unwise or difficult to take liberty with such an organised mass. They deliberately took a false move by receding which the unware mass could not understand. After a while, when they had become a little disorganised, the police fell upon them and opened fire. One Kali Mahallick received three bullet wounds on his chest. And the unknown, unspoken, and unlettered and yet one of the bravest Sri Kali Mahallick died saying, "Brothers don't you worry for me. I will soon take my rebirth in a Free India." Seven others, Nidhi Mahallick, Chinta Das, Shyam Mahallick, Kreesna Mahallick. Gopinath Jana, Sankar Behera and Agani Sahu, died on the spot and still more Nabin Kumar Nayak and Haguru Jena succumbed to the wounds in Bhadrak Hospital. Thus the total dead in the firing was 10. About 40 others were injured and about 40 was arrested in this connection. To pay their last homage to these brave martyrs, the people took the dead bodies in a solemn procession to Bhadrak.

Collective fines were also imposed in these areas.

Firing was also resorted to in Kairadiha, and Tudi-gadia in Khaira Thana, Chatara in Soro Thana, and Lakshmannath Road Rice Mill in Jaleswar Thana, resulting in the death of four and injuries to four others. Those who died were Raghu Behara, Makara Lenka, Kelu Sahu and Sapana Jena of whom Makara and Kelu were from Nilgiri State.

In all these parts the police shamelessly indulged in filthy and abusive language to the women inducing them to give their ornament away to secure their husbands' or relatives' release, failing which threatened them with heavier punishments and so on.

In Bhograí police station the police tried to create

## POPULAR MINISTERS OF ORISSA :



From the left :

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Naba Krishna Chowdhari.       | (2) Nityananda Kanangoe.    |
| (3) Harekrishna Mahatab. Premcir. | (4) Pandit. Lingaraj Missra |
| (5) Radha Krishna Biswas.         |                             |



communal trouble. And in order to crush the non-mussalmans they had sought the help of Mussalmans which, however, they never received. At some places flogging and other methods of torture continued till the unfortunate victims lost their senses.

This is in short the sad but heroic struggle of the district of Balasore following the 9th of August 1942.





**PART IV.**  
**UNITED PROVINCES**



# UNITED PROVINCES

The suffering and torture which the people of the United Provinces had to undergo since 1942 in the regime of Sir Maurice Hallet would never be forgotten. Feast of blood, orgy of loot and reign of terror went on for the last three years—viz., 1942-1945. Police and military played havoc with the people in 1942. They killed persons at the slightest provocation and looted them freely. They burnt houses of the poor without scruple. They raped women in Ballia and elsewhere and dragged them naked into the streets. Students were chased mercilessly and Congressmen were brutally assaulted almost everywhere in the province, bombing and machine-gunning were not things unheard of.

The law of the jungle prevailed in U. P. jails. Every magistrate became a Bourbon and every prison a Bastille. The ordinance raj deprived the judiciary of its usual powers. Government officials also crossed all limits of decency. Bribery and corruption stalked the province. Supply officers, police and other hirelings of the bureaucracy prospered and thrived while the man in the street starved and went naked.

The press was mercilessly throttled. The voice of the people could not be heard and the tyranny of the officials could not be exposed.

Lord Curzon's great ambition was to kill the Congress and in 1900 he wrote: "The Congress is tottering to its fall and one of my great ambitions, while in India, is to assist it to a peaceful demise." Curzon is dead, and the Congress is infinitely stronger today than it was in his time. Hallet had almost the same ambition. He wanted to destroy the Congress in 1942. He let loose a hell of repression on innocent people. He wanted to bury the Congress and cow down the people. In a public speech he said, "We wish to destroy the organization and render it impossible for the movement to grow and expand." He failed in his ambition

and the Congress has become much more powerful than it was in 1942 and the people of the province are more alive to the urgency of ending the British Raj in India than ever before.

"August 1942 revolution" in Allahabad city during the memorable week from August 9 to 17, 1942, can best be chronicled as follows :—

9th August—On receiving the news of the arrest of the leaders the city observed hartal. The students organized a strike and Colleges were closed and they took out a large procession in the afternoon. The Police searched and locked up Congress offices in the city, and arrested all the Congress leaders who could be found.

The stir and the excitement continued through 10th and 11th August but took no definite shape as the people were bewildered and did not know what to do. They were waiting for authoritative instructions or for a lead by the Congress which in the circumstances could not be given. The students continued their strike and took out a number of processions and one of these met with a lathi-charge. 12th August was the most memorable day in an account of Allahabad's part in the struggle. The students decided to take out the processions. One moved on towards the city, the other led by girls and boys of the University marched towards the Kutchery where the District Magistrate, a number of Police officers and a large Police force were present. The procession which was quite peaceful was stopped at some distance from the Collectorate buildings. In order to provoke them to violence the police threw a few brickbats at the crowd which were returned. But no one was hurt and the crowd remained peaceful.

Suddenly and without warning the police then made a heavy lathi-charge severely injuring many students including some girls who were leading the procession.

Soon afterwards the authorities ordered firing. In the course of an hour about six rounds were fired at intervals of roughly ten minutes but the students met this with extra-

ordinary courage and did not leave their places. One of the students, Lal Padamdhar Singh, was killed and altogether about 50 were injured, many severely. Satter, a student of the J. C. High School, received as many as seven wounds.

When the news of the firing reached the city thousands of men came out on the roads and joined the procession which was forced to disperse at the Clock Tower after a severe lathi charge. They collected again at the Jawahar Square and were again attacked with lathis. Then they went to the Loknath crossing where another crowd had collected with the intention of capturing the Kotwali. After looting the E. I. R. booking-office at Meer-gunj, they moved on towards the Kotwali and erected barricades by placing loaded *thelas*, wooden planks and *takhats* on the road. When military lorries full of Baluchi soldiers arrived the crowd pelted stones at them. The soldiers shot at them indiscriminately, but the crowd, protected by the barricades held its ground.

A police sergeant then took the soldiers along another route behind the barricade. The crowd was now exposed to their firing. The leader Raijan, received a bullet wound in the chest and dropped dead. The people began to run away, but the soldiers began to shoot at the running people. A brave school boy, Ramesh Malaviya, who was exhorting the crowd not to run away, was killed on the spot. One Nanka Mehtar was also killed.

The same day a little before dusk some students were standing near the K. U. P. C. Hostel doing nothing in particular. Just then a S. A. C. lorry passed by, one of the soldiers took careful aim and shot a student. The bullet missed him and struck a grass-cutter who died on the spot.

A curfew order had been imposed and lorries full of armed soldiers patrolled the roads, but in spite of this the people continued to uproot telegraph poles, snap wires and entangle them across the streets throughout the night. In the day and at night armed soldiers on foot and in lorries went about shooting indiscriminately any one found near telegraph pole, railway line, culvert or bridge. They would shoot, arrest

or beat up people whenever they found several heads together.

It is impossible to give even an approximate record of the large number of persons injured or killed by the indiscriminate shooting. The dead bodies were removed by the soldiers. In some cases there is evidence to show that the people were killed but could not be traced. Some of these stories of wilful and brutal murder are peculiarly revolting. For instance one Murari Mohan Bhattacharya, a compounder, who had gone out to see a friend was on his way home crossing the Johnstongunj Road near Jhunjharia Pul. A soldier pushed him back with the butt of his rifle and told him to go back. The poor man complied and had gone a few paces when the soldier shot him on the back.

He fell down, then got up and was staggering towards the house of Mr. Chotey Lal Jaiswal, Municipal Commissioner, when the soldier shot him again. The bullet passed through his body and wounded the daughter of Mr. Jaiswal. The soldier then dragged the dead body to the other side of the road. A passing military lorry packed it up and took it away to the military hospital from where the widow received the body next day.

A group of soldiers fired at three Muslim boys in Sabzi Mandi, killing one Abdul Majid, a boy of 16 and injuring another Mohd. Amin.

On the Hewett Road near Grey and Co. a soldier saw two persons coming. He walked stealthily behind a brick pillar of the building. sat down, took aim and fired twice killing one Bhagwati Prasad, a young man of 20 and injuring the other Kanhai Lal.

An elderly man was killed at night at about 1 A. M. by some soldiers who bayoneted him.

From 15th to 17th August, there was a number of cases of persons wearing Gandhi caps being stopped by soldiers and ordered to throw their caps to the ground. Two persons who refused were killed outright and one more was severely injured. One of these was a young man who was walking along the

Grand Trunk Road. A soldier came up and asked him to take his cap off and as he refused he tried to snatch it away. When the man resisted the soldier shot him dead.

A young man of 18, Dasrath Lal Jaiswal, hearing these stories of insult to the Gandhi cap determined to vindicate the national honour. He put on a Gandhi cap and deliberately went up to the crossing of Lowther and Muthigunj roads where a military guard was posted. There were some soldiers on the bridge who ordered him to take his cap off, urinate on it and throw it in the gutter. The boy refused. One of the soldiers hit him so that he fell staggering and then shot at him. The bullet passed through his abdomen. Pressing the wound with one hand and keeping the cap on his head with the other the boy fled to save his life. A second bullet hit his ear and struck one Mahabir Prasad, a Dhobi, who was passing by, killing him on the spot. Dasrath Lal however managed to escape.

Allahabad was at the mercy of the police and military for a long time. They did what they liked. Let us refer here to the deeds of the members of the Indian police. The deputy superintendent of police for over a year remained the Nadirshah of the city and a wave of terror swept over it. The lock-up of the police at Kotwali was a miniature "Red Fort" where Bhaiji, a Congress worker, was beaten so mercilessly that he passed blood. When he went to jail from the lockup, he narrated the whole story. Third degree methods were used in the Kotwali in dealing with Congressmen. Wellknown persons were taken there and beaten with shoes and canes. The police officer used to abuse publicly the Congress leaders and he illtreated Rai Ram Chandra Agarwal, one of the premier rais of Allahabad, and many others. The local police chased and hunted students in the hostels and the University and humiliated them. One day, they invaded the University and attacked the students with batons and hounded them out of the compound. All this happened in the presence of the University authorities. For a long time Allahabad was under the police raj. Policemen mercilessly extracted money, arrested any one they liked, looted any home they chose,



thrashed anybody they pleased. Gambling dens were promoted for the prosperity of the police. It was for all such things that Governor Hallet had been so profusely praising them in his parades and darbars.

Indiscriminate firing on peaceful meetings cannot be justified in any way whatsoever. At Sarani, in the district of Rae Bareilly, Mr. Dev Nath Sharma, who was present at a meeting at Azadgarh was shot dead. On August 18, 1942, as a crowd was going towards police station, the guns of the police belched bullets on it. Ramesh and Mahadev died instantaneously and the injured were taken to hospital struggling between life and death.

What happened at Madhuvan (Azamgarh) is a thrilling story of the people's heroism on the one hand and of the police and military atrocities on the other. People there defended their honour with their lives. The whole village rose as one man to face the military and police who went to loot them. Firing began, patriots receiving bullets on the chest, fell dead. The crowd faced the police for a while but it was impossible to compete with guns and rifles with no arms at all. A number of them fell down dead.

Police and military, who had gone there with tons of kerosene oil tins, did their job. Several houses were burnt, women molested, property looted and huge sums of money realised from the people.

This happened not only in Madhuvan, but in the neighbouring village also. Policemen went to the village of Jaghauli. The house of Pandit Rajdeo Tiwari was attacked, ornaments were taken away by soldiers and his library consisting of Sanskrit books was set on fire. "Harijan Gurukul" which was managed by Swami Satyanand and where 1400 women used to earn their livelihood by spinning was completely destroyed.

Ghazipur, like other eastern districts, had to face brutal repression in 1942 and after. In Sherpur (Ghazipur) lived lionhearted men. People there were out to establish the Congress Raj and they did establish it. Their organisation

was superb and the spirit of discipline unique. They carried on the administration of the village peacefully for some days. But then Nethersole and Hardy started on their march in the Ghazipur district and devastated the village through which they passed.

On August 24, District Magistrate Munro reached Sherpur with 400 Baluchi soldiers. The armless people could not resist the armed forces. Pillage and plunder began. Even flour was snatched from the peoples' hands and was thrown into the dust. Ornaments were removed from womens' bodies and their modesty was outraged. The cash and ornaments were pocketed by the soldiers and officials. Sherpur suffered a loss of about two lakhs of rupees.

The Munro Massacre was not considered enough and then again after some days the sub-divisional officer went there to complete the Munro chapter of loot and murder. Collective fines were levied mercilessly. Six brave men of Sherpur, bravest of the brave, were shot dead by Baluchi soldiers. They were Shiva Pooj Narain, Rakheswar Rai, Narain Prasad, Rajaram, Ramcharan Upadhaya and Vesna Narain Rai. One woman, Radhakarano, jumped into a ditch in order to save her honour from the soldiers and died. In Ghazipur about 80 Villages were burnt and about 400 homes looted.

Jaunpur had its share of firing and lathi-charge, but a new method of torture which was invented by a deputy collector and tahsildar in Jaunpur was more than barbarous. This new method was called "current". It had nothing to do with electric current. It was a device to make people impotent and powerless. Men were made to sit in an ugly posture and tortured. Some parts of their bodies were made to bleed and then they were left to suffer throughout their lives. More than twenty-five men in Jaunpur were victimised in this fashion in the Hallet regime.

### **BALLIA.**

Hallett's regime broke all records of tyranny at Ballia. An army of soldiers, heated by Nethersole and Marsh Smith reached Ballia on August 22. And then began an orgy of

loot and plunder, rape and ravage, beating and shooting, firing and burning. Helpless men, women and children ran helter skelter. Military raj was established and Nethersole, Marsh Smith and their underlings became the supreme dictators of Ballia. This is, in short, an account of police repression, the further details of which will be revealed by us in course of our narrative of the uprisings of the people and the attempts by the bureaucracy to suppress them.

With Ballia is attached the name of 'Pandeys'. Nearly a century back, when India realised for the first time the burden of the yoke of slavery, the man, who first raised his voice against it was Mangal Pandey, the sepoy—the resident of Ballia. Now a century later, another Pandey—Chittoo by name—hoisted the banner of independence at Ballia in August 1942 and ruled the district for about a fortnight. "

Just after the arrest of the members of the All-India Congress Working Committee on August 9, 1942, the police raided the office of the District Congress Committee, seized its property, and arrested prominent congress workers of the district. This was indeed a challenge to the people of Ballia. The whole district observed complete hartal next day, i. e. on August 10.

The following three days were marked by processions and hartals. People were leaderless and probed in darkness for their programmes. They knew not what to do and what not to do. Suddenly there came a light, not from the Congress high command but from London justifying the arrests of the members of the Congress Working Committee. Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, issued a statement and made certain allegations against the Congress. The bewildering public of the country took his words to be true to the letter and accepted them as the genuine programme to act upon. Ballia also was not slow to take up the clue.

The people now had the programme before them to cut off communication and to capture the administration. On August 12 the whole district of Ballia took up the work of cutting the telegraph wires, removing the railway lines,

breaking the bridges and obstructing in all possible ways the means of communications. They burnt the railway stations and post offices. Not a single allegation has been made even by the Government against the public of harrassment to the Government servants. Whenever and wherever the public attacked a railway station, property was destroyed but the cash was handed over to the Station Masters. By the evening of August 14 all the communications throughout the district were destroyed or were made ineffective and the district was practically cut off from other parts of the country.

Now the public turned to the capture of power. It took back the office of the District Congress Committee from the police on August 15 and hoisted the national flag. The Congress Bhawan turned into the Secretariat of the Government of Independent Ballia.

Ballia city observed complete hartal for six days. On Saturday evening, the newly formed Government issued a notification to the effect that on Sunday the market should open. And by noon next day the bazar was held in full grandeur. People came from all corners for marketing. But it was intolerable to the loyal servants of the British Empire. The Tahsildar and the Reserved Lines Inspector entered the bazar on the police lorry with the armed police and fired freely from the moving lorry on the marketeers and rounded through the bazar from one end to the other. Nine persons died. The mob was peaceful and there was no excitement. But, what made them fire so unscrupulously is still a mystery. Whatever the motive behind this firing might have been, it, instead of strengthening the British administration, shook it so severely that the edifice collapsed completely by August 19.

While the firing was going on in the city of Ballia, people had captured peacefully the police station at Santawar. They took possession of arms, burnt official papers and demolished the thana buildings. The Station Officer with his subordinates surrendered to the public. It was followed with the surrender of the police stations of Nartie, Sikandar-pur, Ubhaon, Garwar and Haldharpur. On August 18 the

public also took possession of the Tahsil, treasury and the police station at Bausdih. All papers were destroyed and new administrators were appointed. The public had their own Tahsildar. Government servants were dismissed after payment of three months' salary in advance.

On August 16 the public raided the Tahsil, treasury and the police station at Lasra. The Government officers at first surrendered to the public and national flags were hoisted on the buildings. When the public entered the compound of a most reputed loyalist of the place to take over possession of a Government seed godown, the gate was bolted and the police opened fire on the public. Consequently three persons died and hundreds were injured. At Baria on August 17 the public went to the thana and hoisted the national flag over the buildings. The Station officer wore the Gandhi Cap and raised national slogans with the public. On demand of arms, he promised to hand them over next day. When in the afternoon of August 18, no less than twenty-five to thirty thousand people went to the thana, the Station officer asked the leaders to come into the compound of the thana and requested the mob to keep outside peacefully. As soon as the leaders of the party entered the compound, the officer got the gate bolted. Long before the arrival of the mob, the constables of the thana had gone upstairs out of fear. With the assurance that arms would be brought down for surrender the officer also went upstairs and bolted the doors. Thus hiding themselves in a safe corner the police began firing, but the mob refused to move without their leaders who were bolted in the compound. The mob was fully determined to face the consequences and a fierce war between violence and non-violence began. The mob faced the bullets and moved forward. As soon as the men in the front fell, the men on the rear took their places. A young boy named Kaushalya Kumar, noticed in the meantime that the national flag that was hoisted the previous day on the building, was being removed. He lost no time, rushed disregarding the bullets, climbed over the building and snatched the flag from the

hands of the Station Officer. But the brave boy was instantaneously bayoneted and thrown down the roof. The firing continued from 3-30 P. M. to 8 P. M. without stop or cessation, but the mob remained firm and undeterred. At last non-violence won over violence. Their ammunition exhausted, the police had to surrender. Though they had taken away the lives of no less than 19 persons and severely injured 41 and slightly injured many, still the public kept themselves calm and cool. They contented themselves, by destroying the buildings and documents.

By the mid-night of August 18, the British administration collapsed. The district authorities found themselves cut off from the provincial administration on the one hand and on the other their armed resources were not sufficient to face the infuriated mass of people. Consequently on August 16 a gentleman, prominent among the loyalists, visited the jail and interviewed the Congress leaders on behalf of the district authorities. He wanted to know if they could help the authorities to maintain peace and order in case they were released. The next day, on August 17, the District Magistrate, Mr. J. Nigam, visited the jail personally along with the Superintendent of Police, Reserve Lines Inspector, Kotwal and other officers of the headquarters. He called Mr Radha Mohan Singh, a prominent Congress Worker of the district, acquainted him with the situation of the district and placed their difficulties and sought help. But on behalf of the Congress he refused to give any assistance unless powers were handed over to the Congress. He also asked the District Magistrate to surrender unconditionally and sever connections with the Provincial Government and obey the orders of the Council of Administration appointed by the public. After a long talk the district magistrate took time to consider the proposal and retired.

On August 19, when the administration collapsed in the district and news came to the headquarters that public was coming to capture the Collectorate and the Treasury and also to raid the jail to release the Congressmen, Mr. J. Nigam

again visited the jail. This time he put before the Congress leaders an unconditional suggestion that he had detained them at his own will and now he would release them on his own accord, but they should go out and maintain peace and handle the situation. The congressmen in the jail discussed the proposal and agreed to carry out his proposal only if all of them were released. Accordingly Sjt. Chittoo Pandey with 100 of his followers came out of the jail with the administration in their hands.

The public accorded a grand reception to the leaders. In a public meeting at the Town Hall the Independence of Ballia was declared. A party, who could not be contacted by the Congress leaders, in the meantime raided the houses of some of the magistrates and the police out-posts and looted them. But even they did not put their hands on any person.

The newly formed Government on the night of August 19 issued a proclamation assuring the public of their safety and on August 20, a meeting of people of all shades of opinion, Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor, loyalists and rebels was held at the Kothi of Hanumanganj and they unanimously requested the newly formed Congress government to take up the administration. As a token of their allegiance to this newly formed Government the public contributed thousands of rupees to defray the expenses of the administration.

Accordingly the new Government of Ballia with Chittoo Pandey as Chief took the administration in hand and the British officers and their subordinates were arrested and kept under detention in the police line, the new Government having taken the responsibility of their person and property.

Thus, since the beginning of the revolution up to August 22, it was to the credit of the Congress organisation that during those twelve days there was not a single crime in the district. The village panchayats had the administration in their own way.

In the town, people had looted the seed godown, railway goods shed and steamer jetty. As soon as the newly formed Government came to power, the matter was thoroughly

investigated. Every one who had shared the loot, came forward voluntarily and accepted his guilt and brought back the loot and returned it to the authorities. In Reoti Mandal certain culprits had taken away ornaments worth Rs. 2200/- of a widow. In Independent Ballia she complained of this before the President of the Mandal Congress Committee. The President got the culprits arrested who returned the ornaments. The culprits also avowed not to commit any such crime in future. It is noteworthy that the British police had failed in tracing these culprits.

On the night between August 22 and 23, the British Military forces entered Ballia and with them came Mr. Nethersole and Mr. Marshsmith. By the morning terror again prevailed in the city.

To wear a Gandhi cap was a crime in Ballia district. Collective fines of twelve lakhs of rupees were imposed on the district but more than 29 lakhs was realized according to the figures collected by the District Congress Committee of Ballia. 46 men died of bullet wounds, 105 houses were burnt and 100 houses were demolished and the estimated loss amounted to 38 lakhs of rupees.





**PART V**  
**CENTRAL PROVINCES**



# CENTRAL PROVINCES

The Central Provinces echoed with the mantra "Do or Die" almost immediately after it had been uttered by the Congress High Command in Bombay. The first trouble started at Nagpur when a flag demonstration provoked the wrath of the police. The fire soon spread through every district and village. The tale of oppression in Chimur is indeed sordid and harrowing. The simple people who suffered there at the hands of the police and the military stand as glaring bill of indictment of police tyranny, organised violence and Nazism.

Disturbances in Nagpur started on August 12, 1942. Congress volunteers, followed by a few others, came to the District Court and hoisted a Tri-Colour Flag on the Sessions Judge's Court. The police were taken unaware. The news spread and more and more people began to collect. Reserve police force were sent for. Streams of people now rushed to the scene. They wanted to proceed to the Secretariat and the General Post Office. Mr. A. H. Layard, District Magistrate, and Rai Saheb S. R. Morey, City Magistrate, with a small police force hurriedly blockaded the way.

Mr. F. M. Naidu, advocate and Congress leader, reasoned with the authorities not to use force and with the crowd not to defy the order. Fifteen minutes were given to disperse. The crowd was just turning back when a Reserve Force arrived under the District Superintendent of Police. After a little confabulation with the District Magistrate, a tear-gas attack was made on the returning crowd. An innocent rickshawala was lathi-charged. The crowd was chased to the Science College, where a shot was fired. This was a signal for a general upheaval.

## SITABALDI

In Sitabaldi the mail-van was set on fire. Throughout the city, the telephone and telegraph wires were cut. Hume pipes lying along the road were put across the roads to prevent

speedy transport of the police force. The police chowkies were set on fire. The Provincial Co-operative Bank was set ablaze.

In Itwari the grain godowns, including that of the Government were looted. The Post Office in Itwari was set on fire and cash removed. The military arrived six hours later from Kamptee. This was a Punjabi regiment. It had soon to be replaced by the Mahar Battalion. For two days, all traffic was closed and the people remained indoors. Whoever ventured to come out, fell a victim to military firing. At the lowest non-official estimate, some 200 persons were shot dead. The first to be shot down in Itwari was a Muslim lad of 18 years.

Chimur is a village in the Chanda district in the Central Provinces with a population of about 6000. Since many years past it has been regarded as a place of some importance. This is a politically conscious village, having local branches of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress.

The upheaval took place here on August 16, 1942. It was Fagapanchami Day. In consequence of the disturbances the Sub-Divisional Officer, the Circle Inspector of Police, the Naib Tahsildar and a constable were killed and burnt. All the Government buildings including the police station together with the residential quarters, the schools and the Rest House were set on fire and burnt.

On the 19th of August 1942, 200 British soldiers and 50 Indian sepoy<sup>1</sup>s reached the place. The District Magistrate with 50 constables also went to the place. Now began the ordeal of the people of Chimur. The terror-stricken people both rich and poor, big and small, hid themselves in their houses. The streets were deserted and ruthless savagery was rampant everywhere. The reign of terror lasted for two days, during which men were beaten, 120 of them were arrested, the women and girls outraged, molested and raped.

The above, in short, is an account of what happened in Ashti and Chimur. But the story of the August Movement in these two historic places would not be complete without a

reference to the report submitted by Dr. B. S. Moonje and Shri Gate.

"First we went to the Railway station, which though repaired, still bore quite visible signs of damage. We met and interrogated the Station Master and his Assistant. They told us that, on the day of occurrence, mob of about 500 men, composed of Hindus and Muslims, with an admixture of coolies with crowbars from the mines nearby came to the station, invading from all sides. Their very first act was to cut all the telegraph wires.

Next they entered the booking office and took possession of whatever cash was found. While this was going on, one portion of the mob, entered another room and taking possession of the tin of kerosene oil there set the station building on fire. Meanwhile another portion of the mob went over to the railway line and with their crowbars began to tamper with them. Just at that time a train from Nagpur came in but not getting the signal had to be piloted to the platform. The train was emptied of all passengers and the first and second class bogies were immediately set on fire.

Besides these, two significant incidents happened at the station. When the mob first collected there, they found a sub-inspector of police in uniform with prisoners arrested during the previous evening in course of public meeting held to organize the mass movement. Immediately, the prisoners were released and the sub-inspector was made a captive. About the same time, as stated above, the train from Nagpur arrived and among the passengers was found another sub-inspector who was returning from Nagpur. He also was taken captive. These two captive sub-inspectors were then made to take off their uniforms and put on Gandhi caps.

The mob, then, formed into a procession and with these two captives holding Congress flags in their hands in front of the procession, went towards the town.

When the procession reached the Police Station and the Tahsil office, this mob was joined by another larger mob, of Hindus and Moslems, shouting the same Congress slogans.

Being satisfied with having made the sub-inspectors put on Gandhi caps and shout Congress slogans and finding greater attraction in the activities of the bigger mob surrounding the Tahsil buildings, the first mob left behind the two captive sub-inspectors and also the railway station staff who were in no way molested or hurt.

We next went and inspected the police station and the Tahsil buildings. The Tahsil building was completely burnt down. The treasury was looted. We were shown the back wall of the treasury room. It had been repaired. The wall and the doors were broken open with crowbars.

We next went to a building of the hospital where the sub-inspectors of police are now having their offices. Here we interrogated the various officials. One head constable, Mohabir, narrated the story as follows : When he saw the mob invading the building, he asked the Tahsildar for permission to use his rifle and shoot. The Tahsildar told him that there was no need to shoot, as the leaders of the mob were saying that they would only plant their Congress Flag on the building and disperse.

We next saw the Post Office. This also was in ashes. We then went straight to Umbela. We took our seats in the sarai and the men of the village assembled to meet us. We first interrogated the prominent 'pandas' (priests) of the place. They all told us that for two days the Mahar sepoy of the Mahar Battalion stationed at Ramtek to control the situation, visited the Umbela village, accompanied by the Mahar Naib Tahsildar and forcibly entered their houses, broke open the doors and took away money and whatever they lay their hands on. When prevented or sometimes resisted these sepoy struggled with the householders and in consequence, the household deity was polluted and cooking utensils thrown about. Two of those 'pandas' complained that they were beaten with sticks. A tall old man who recognized Dr Moonje, came forward and narrated his own story. Mahar sepoy, he said, entered his house and went, in spite of remonstrances, through all the rooms, polluted his

kitchen, broke open the doors and boxes and took away Rs. 1100/- in cash and notes.

The guardian of the main temple declared that some of these sepoys announced that they were Mahrattas, went inside the temple but did not do any damage either to the temple inside or to the main deity. We did not get any report of molestation of women, though we had been told that two cases of rape by the sepoys had actually happened.

### ASTHI

On September 22, we left in the morning for Asthi with the Commissioner of the Nagpur Division in a car. A bridge on the approach to Asthi was tampered with. It was destroyed on the day of occurrence so that no motors from Nagpur were able to pass to Asthi. Further on, we saw several babool trees which had been felled and were said to have been put across the road to serve as blockade to prevent motor cars and lorries going to Asthi. The Deputy Commissioner, Wardha, was there and Khan Sahib Ali Akhtar, Deputy Superintendent of Police, arrived soon after. He is in charge of the investigation. We all settled down in a building of the hospital.

We went out to see the buildings of the Police station which were burnt down. We were shown the spots where the officials were killed and burnt and from where police constable had fired a shot and killed a Moslem from among the invading mob. We also saw from a distance that the roof of the A. V. School was burnt down. We were further told that the furniture of the Hindu Girls School had also been destroyed by fire. The invading party consisted of both Hindus and Moslems, mostly from the surrounding villages.

After inspecting the spots we returned to the place where we were staying. Here Khan Sahib Ali Akhtar narrated all the incidents as they had happened. He told us that a Moslem in the mob was shot down by the police. He gave us a pathetic description of how the police officers were killed and burnt.



We next interviewed the responsible people of the town of Asthi. They all told us in one voice that the sub-inspector of police, who had been killed, was very popular with the people and they were shocked when they heard of his death. They gave shelter to the families of the murdered police officials, both Hindu and Mohammedan. They also told us that a Moslem in the mob which consisted of both Hindus and Moslems, was shot down by the police.

They further stated that during the two days great confusion and anarchy prevailed in the town and there was general looting of grain in the village, in which both Hindus and Moslems participated. When Mr B. K. Mehta, Sub-divisional Officer came to the town with an Indian Military force complete order, peace and confidence was restored. They were "unsparing" in their praise for the balanced temper and administrative abilities of the S. D. O. The military was not allowed to enter the town, though food and comfort were provided for the force.

We returned to Nagpur 'via' Arvi and Wardha. We reached Nagpur by midnight. On September 25 we went by the Grand Trunk Express to Warora. The Commissioner of the Nagpur Division also went by the same train with us to Warora. The Deputy Commissioner of Chanda met us at Warora.

### CHIMUR

In the morning of September 26 we went in two separate cars to Chimur and reached there at about 10 A.M. On the way about three miles from Chimur, there is a bridge which was demolished by a riotous mob on the day of occurrence. It was shown to us by the Deputy Commissioner of Chanda who also showed us the spots where the Circle Inspector of Police and a constable were killed and burnt. We also saw the trees that were felled to serve as blockade on the road to prevent motors and lorries coming by the road to Chimur.

We next saw the Dak Bungalow which was completely burnt down with its outhouses which were partially burnt. Here we met a Chowkidar of the Dak Bungalow who being interrogated, told us how the Sub-divisional Officer,

Mr Dungji and the Naib Tahsildar, a Christian gentleman were killed. The chowkidar somehow escaped from the mob and ran away to save his life.

We then went into the town of Chimur and settled ourselves in a room of the building of the Hospital. We then walked down to see the buildings of the Police station and the School. They were all partially burnt. Here we were told that men who were arrested from the town, about 130 in number, were accommodated in the 3 or 4 small rooms of the police station building and some were put in small cattle-pounds which was open on the top being practically without roof. We were further told that in those days it was raining frequently. We were surprised that such a large number of men should have been crowded and confined in such small rooms and particularly in the open cattle-pound exposed to rains. The Deputy Commissioner admitted that there being no other accommodation available these men had to be kept in such small rooms and in the open cattle-pound exposed to rains. To us it appeared as a sort of black hole and we leave it to be imagined how the men had suffered in such overcrowding.

We then took a round in the town to go to the house of Mr Bagde, who is an old man of about 60 years of age and one of the well-to-do men of the town. His wife, Mrs Bagde, came up to the verandah and recognising the Deputy Commissioner, welcomed us all in a tone of humiliation and agony of mind.

We all, including the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, sat down in the verandah, and appealing to her sense of dignity and self-respect, brought her round to give us a complete story of molestation of and outrage on women of the town. She then sent for and collected several women of the town, who, with feelings of shame and outraged dignity, narrated their separate tales of molestations and actual rape.

Seventeen women in all narrated their own stories. Out of these 17 women, 13 were actually raped, some by more than one white soldier, and the remaining four were only

molested. Those women in great agony of mind gave expression to their desire of revenge being taken by their menfolk.

Mrs Bagde is a remarkable lady of courage and leadership. She also told us of an incident in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner, who was sitting by our side. She said that one day she, worried by frequent visits from white soldiers to her house in batches throughout the day and late in the night took courage and went up to the Deputy Commissioner and told him of her trouble.

The Deputy Commissioner bluntly and heartlessly retorted, "who has invited this trouble? Who has brought these white soldiers? It is your menfolk, your husbands and brothers."

She was stunned. But soon, however, the Deputy Commissioner appeared to relent and ordered the soldiers not to do any mischief in the town.

Of the women so molested, a daughter of the Naik families was raped by one white soldier and a police constable. They then took away a gold ring from her finger and extorted rupees ten from her mother, who, being old, was removed to another room and had to stand this shameful happening helplessly, all the menfolk of her household having been previously arrested and removed to the town. Another lady, who was pregnant and whose modesty was not spared for that, is the wife of the Sarpanch, that is, the president of the village panchayat.

As for the looting and destruction of the household furniture, safes, boxes, wearing apparels, food grains and almirahs, it is incalculable. But the sight of this destruction in several houses is heart rendering. Both the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner saw this destruction with their own eyes in company with us. We were provided by our friends with a list of ten or twelve houses of well-to-do people of the town where it appears this kind of loot and destruction of properties were indulged in freely and with impunity.

Having thus finished our enquiries in the town we

returned to our place for meals at about 2 P.M. After meals the Sub-Inspector of Police, in charge of the Police station, being interrogated described the happening as follows.

He told us that the mob was composed of Hindus and Muslims and that those men who held public meetings and addressed them were school masters and congress leaders of the town. He did not mention any name of the respectable families of the town, such as the Naiks and Bagdes. He told us of his conversation with Sant Tukadoji Maharaj. He went to see him in his own house where there was a large gathering of his disciples. In their presence and within their hearing, Tukadoji Maharaj said, 'You are the Sub-Inspector of Police ; do your duty. These people being Congressmen are pledged to non-violence and will remain non-violent.'

It was about 4 P.M. We now left the town to return to Warora, But on our way to our cars we went to see a *teli* woman called Ashtankar in her own house. She was ill and gave birth to a child only a few days ago. Her mother-in-law was also sitting by her side. She told us how she was caught hold of by a police constable and was raped, pregnant though she was. We then went by the way of Naik houses and entering them we saw with our own eyes the shocking spectacles of the destruction of the household furniture.

We next took our cars and returned to Warora by about 7 p.m. We spent the night in the Dak Bungalow and by the Grand Trunk Express reached Nagpur on September 27. This was how we finished our inspection.

Having come to know of our arrival in Chimur several people from surrounding villages and from the town itself, some with written applications, came to see us and complained to us about the exorbitant, unjust and unbalanced levy of fines and particularly of the ruthless and heartless manner in which the fines were collected. It might have added to the prestige of the collecting officials as the most efficient hands but at what moral cost to the Government ?

We could see the discontent and misery writ large on their faces. Even the women whom we had occasion to inter-

view complained loudly with unconcealed contempt. In the case of women the particular point to note was that immediately after the incidents, most of their menfolk including bread-earners and managers of respective household, were arrested and taken to the lock-up and it was in their absence that the military groups accompanied by the local police and other officials were sent to their house, bent on exercising ruthless co-ercion and to expedite the realisation of fines.

We were told on reliable evidence that a muslim merchant of Chimur was utilised to give cash to those Hindus who were in need of it to pay the fines by selling their gold and silver to him. We were told that the muslim merchant secured 400 tolas of gold and 4500 tolas of silver by buying the gold at Rs. 20/- to Rs. 40/- per tola and silver at 4 as. to 6 as. per tola.

Muslims were not inconspicuous in the activities of the destruction in the towns we visited. Can it not be imagined how it would disturb inter-communal amity between Moslems and Hindus living side by side as neighbour in far off villages?"

The above is the account of repressions of the military and the police given out by Dr B. S. Moonje and Mr M. N. Gate who visited Chimur on August 19. The latter part of their statement recommended to the Government to appoint a Committee of Enquiry to investigate into the happenings.

Sufferings and sacrifices were universal throughout the country during the August Revolt. Mahakosal was in the forefront of the struggle and had its share of sufferings and heroic martyrdom. The challenge of Government to the nation was accepted by the people of Mahakosal with courage and heroism. The atrocities of the Government were not confined to the outside public only but had their counterpart even inside the jails, where the security prisoners as well as political convicts were subjected to all possible cruel and savage treatment besides insults and humiliations.

At Jubbulpore, the Capital of Mahakosal, firing was resorted to about a dozen times causing several casualties and

one death. The firing was absolutely uncalled for and indiscriminate. Even the women were not spared and received gun-shot injuries. One of the woman victims of the firing was Shrimati Dundi Bai. Here is what she says,—“I was standing in front of my house with a child in my arms. There were several other women also with me. The police was chasing and beating the unarmed public with lathis. In the meantime I heard the crack of shots and, thereupon, I advised the women to move inside. They did so. While I was entering the house to take cover, a bullet struck me under the waist. I fell down, senseless bleeding profusely. I was removed to the hospital, where the bullet was extracted from my person and it took me over two weeks to leave the hospital.”

Tear gas was used several times to disperse the crowd, causing untold distress and suffering. The ‘slit trenches’ which were dug by the A. R. P. authorities, proved to be traps for the people. The police beat those who had fallen into these trenches during the rush. The privacy of the houses was violated and the police scaled the walls even at dead of night to make arrests. The house-raids became a frequent feature of police activities. The house occupied by Mr Sita Ram, the manager of the Khaddar Bhandar was raided 35 times, raids taking place sometimes thrice during one night.

The properties, including records, books and other articles belonging to the Mahakosal Provincial Congress and other District Congress Committee offices in the province were removed and dumped into neglected places by the authorities. This has resulted in a serious damage to the Congress properties and some of them have been ruined beyond repairs. The Village Uplift Centres, which had been running in Betul and Hoshangabad districts, were also declared unlawful and the premises were taken under official possession.

The members of the Communist Party, who had arranged to hold a public meeting to record their protest

against the repressive policy of the Provincial Government, were arrested and detained in the Jubbulpore jail as security prisoners, but they were released only after brief confinement.

Over 1000 persons including about 200 children and several women were arrested in the Jubbulpore district of whom over 500 were detained in the jails for quite a long term. The fury of the police resulted in the wanton destruction of properties, books and records of the Mahavir Jain Club. The furniture and the durries were removed by the police. The people, no doubt, did not take all this lying down and they retaliated by cutting wires, attacking the Government property and indulged even in throwing stones but without causing any serious injuries, either to police or to the other Government employees. This restraint of the people was indeed admirable and reflected the spirit of non-violence inculcated in them by the Congress.

The incidents of Jubbulpore were more or less repeated in all the 14 districts of 'Mahakosal. At Garha-Kotah in the Saugor district, the police opened fire on a Prabhat Pheri killing Saboolal Jain—a youth of 18. At Chichi, in the Hoshangabad district, the police started firing when the weekly market was in full swing and injured several people, including women. In the Betul district, a railway station was burnt down by the people but they had taken good care to see that the station staff and other employees were first removed to avoid any injury to them. The police resorted to firing in the district causing deaths and injuries.

The worst terrorism was directed against the Gonds to frighten them away from the Congress movement. Their leaders including Vishnu Gond, his wife and Mahasingh Gond were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Vishnu Gond was first sentenced to death, but later his punishment was commuted to a life sentence. In the Mandla District, attempts were made to blow up the culverts in retaliation against the terrible repression. Uday Chand, a 18 year old Jain youth, who was an enthusiastic Congress worker, was shot dead.

The repression had its worst form in the Jubbulpore division, where one of the principal responsible officers had given clear orders not to show any compunction and "shoot the Congress fighter like rabbits". In the Chhattisgarh district, the people rallied under the Congress Flag in large numbers and suffered imprisonment and other atrocities. Some enthusiastic persons attempted to blow up the jail wall at Raipur, but did not succeed and were later on sentenced to imprisonments.

Collective fines were imposed and realised with characteristic ruthlessness in some districts.

The treatment meted out to politicals in jails was also most humiliating. On or about September 17, 1942, the detenus were subjected to lathi-charges twice in the lower octagon of the Central Jail, Jubbulpore, where the security prisoners of Class II were kept. Several detenus were injured. The remaining prisoners were kept continuously locked up for days together and were not allowed to take even baths outside the barracks. A number of detenus were forcibly removed to the 'cells' and were beaten mercilessly. In the name of maintaining discipline in the jail, the persons, convicted for political offences, were segregated and put to all sorts of troubles, physical and mental.

In short, the struggle continued unabated in spite of the repression, and it revealed the unconquerable and resilient spirit of the people to achieve freedom under the banner of the Congress regardless of the cost they might have to pay for it.

## SIND

Sind did not escape the fury of offensive launched by the bureaucracy against nationalist forces that struggled to break loose of the imperialist domination after August '42. Although the number of detenus and convicted persons in Sind 1942 did not exceed 1000, the total number of young boys and girls arrested, but subsequently let off, exceeded 2000. In the area under martial law over 200 boys were given from six to



thirty stripes, for most minor offences. Arrested women and girls were sometimes left out in out-of-the-way places at dusk with no time to shift for themselves to a place of safety. Hemu Kalani, a lad of 18, was hanged for attempting to remove rails. In Karachi, at the initial stages of the Government's offensive against the Congress, 'makranis' were hired who resorted to indiscriminate beating of citizens in clubs and libraries. Some of the arrested students were subjected to the humiliation of forcibly bowing before the hired hooligans and touching their shoes. At Hyderabad girls of tender age of nine and eleven were arrested as late as 2nd October 1943 for merely crying the slogan 'Hindusthan Azad'.

In all, lathi charges were made about twenty times in various parts of Sind during the first phase of the offensive. No firing took place during the whole movement.

Some isolated attempts of tampering with telegraph wires and postboxes were made. Certain desperates also committed a dacoity in the city of Karachi for financing their so-called revolutionary organisation. But their plan miscarried. On the whole however, the movement in Sind continued to remain non-violent in character. Most of the Muslims kept away from it. The labour and peasant population also played no effective part in it. The movement was more or less confined to middle class, in which a few Muslims had also their share.

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**PART VI**  
**SOUTH INDIA**



## SOUTH INDIA

The 1942 movement in South India was a fight almost on two fronts,—the one against the Government and the other against the Communists. Malabar had been conspicuously the bee-hive of communist activities till the tragic incidents of September, 1940, took place when they laid an ill-advised and ill-timed revolt against the expressed instructions of the A. I. C. C. and were beleived to have murdered a few policemen at Morazha and Mattanur. The terrible repression that followed as the party went underground leaving their followers absolutely to the mercy of the police raj, had shaken the faith of the peasants and the masses in the communists. An indirect result of the 1942 movement as far as Kerala is concerned is the complete isolation of the Communists from its public life. Villages which once reverberated with communist slogans began to resound with the 'Quit India' mantram.

Every thing was in a pell mell state in Kerala after the arrests of the all-India leaders of Kerala. The students went on strike for an indefinite period throughout the length and breadth of the province. Colleges and schools had to be closed for days. Mammoth processions of the students went winding round the streets of the town with the zeal of patriotism writ large on every face. Mob fury was witnessed at Chemanchari, in North Malabar, where the railway station and the sub-registrar's office were burnt to ashes. At Ulliai a bridge was demolished. Cutting of telegraph and telephone wires became things of daily occurrence for months together. At Nadapuram the Munsiff's court, at Telicheri the sub-court, at Nanduvannore the sub-registrar's office, at Chambal the Government fish yard were all either exploded or set fire to. The inhabitants of a small factory town called Feroke which once was the Malabar headquarters of Tipu Sultan startled up one night at the sound of a loud explosion. A

country bomb had exploded causing considerable damage to Feroke railway bridge. Uppokuti, a petty shopkeeper, who happened to be a Congressman was taken to custody and was sentenced to 10 years R. I. and was fined Rs. 500 in default of which he was to serve the sentence for 2 years more.

Sabotage activities continued in full vigour in North Malabar. The Governor's special car while proceeding from Cannanore to Calicut was held up in the night at Chambal by huge bonfire on the railway line. At Ernakulam the pandal in which the Governor of Madras was to have addressed a meeting was in flames a few minutes before the arrival of His Excellency. The district authorities thought that the sabotage activities would cease if T. K. Narayanam, a leading Congressman of North Malabar was arrested. He was accordingly taken away. But this provocation from the Government added a fresh momentum to the movement. A case known as the Tellichari Conspiracy, was then foisted upon the chief lieutenants and co-workers of Narayanam and the accused in that case were alleged to have been responsible for all the explosions, burnings and wire cuttings in North Malabar. Balam was sentenced for 10 years and five others for seven years each. •

Civil disobedience, mass meetings, huge and monstrous processions, and picketing became the order of the day. Hundreds were being rushed to the jails for peaceful as well as sabotage activities. For shouting Mahatma Gandhijiki Jai, a young student was beaten with shoes by the Headmaster of a Tellichari High School. All the students in all the high schools in Tellichari went on strike as a protest against the cowardly and abominable action of the Head Master. Ten boys courted imprisonment by picketing at the schools in this connection. The communists advised the students to pocket the insults. They were seen going round from house to house requesting students to attend schools and parents to send their boys to schools.

Kelappah was arrested in Tellichari and Madhaba Menon and Damodara Menon at Calicut on the 9th August.

Kelappan is to Kerala what Gandhiji is to India. With the arrest of Kelappan there was regular rounding up of all the important workers of the Congress like R. Raghaba Memon, M. P. Damodaran and Sm. A. V. Kuthimalu Amma and Mahomed Abdul Rashid, thrice elected president of the Provincial Congress Committee.

Nabin Chand Iswar Lal Shroff was the first martyr in the province. He was a Gujrati student aged 19 studying in the intermediate class of the Zamorin's College at Calicut. For leading the students movement at Calicut immediately after the arrest of the leaders he was sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 75/- in default—three 'months' imprisonment. His mother went to the Court to pay the fine. "Mother, if you pay the fine, you will never see your son Nabin alive", were the brave words uttered by this gallant boy to his mother. With tears in her eyes the mother turned back. The boy courted imprisonment and was sent to Alipuram jail. He was placed in C class and was refused his usual wheat diet. The jail food proved quite unwholesome to his system and in consequence he fell ill. The jail doctors would say that he was suffering from Malaria. But it was subsequently found that he was actually suffering from Typhoid. The Medical Officer first refused to send him to the Headquarters Hospital for treatment. But on the threat from other prisoners to go on hunger strike, the medical officer finally felt bound to send the boy outside for better treatment. But four days prior to the date of release of bold Nabin he passed away as a prisoner in police custody at the Bellary Headquarters Hospital. This was not the solitary instance when red tapism of the jail authorities led to sad and grave consequences. L. S. Prabhu, P. K. Kunhi, Sankara Menon, K. Kuni Ram and Mr Kombi Kutti Menon also breathed their last almost under similar circumstances.

Kerala is the province which gave birth to Shri Sankar, the great religious philosopher, to Shri Narayan Guru, the social revolutionary, who preached Harijan uplift and advocated the abolition of caste long before they became

political planks ; to Mohakabi Kumaran Asan the poet of the renaissance and to Sir C. Sankar Nair, who once adorned the Congress as its president. During the stormy days of 1942 Kerala proved itself worthy of the legacy that was bequeathed to her by Kerala Varma, Pazhassi Raja, 'the royal rebel' who fought the Duke of Wellington (then Col. Wellesley) to a standstill for over a decade, and by Velluthambi Dallawa, the patriotic 'rebel dewan' of Travancore whose 'deadbody' the Britishers 'hanged unto death' after the fall of his valiant army.

### KARNATAK

The hasty and ill-conceived policy of repression pursued by the autocrats of Delhi was enough provocation to the Indian mind which otherwise is placid and often dominated by stoical indifference to pleasure and pain. The unarmed nation took up the challenge of the armed might of the British imperialism. The resistance gained momentum and it was confined to the youths and people who were firm devotees to Congress ideology. The merchant, the banker, the capitalist, the lawyer and most of the intelligentsia kept themselves aloof. But in Bombay, Karnatak, Assam, Midnapore the masses on their initiative participated in the movement.

The movement presented a good opportunity to some officials to further their own end. An over-enthusiastic police official became fully alive to the situation. He felt that the more the number of arrests he made the more was the chance of his promotion assured. He could act on any information however unreliable. In this district of Karnatak persons who were miles distant from the Congress movement were roped in and were made to enjoy the hospitality of his Majesty in spite of the protests, appeals, and importunities of their relatives. The result was that while the other 25 districts in the Madras Presidency could hardly boast of more than 12 detenues each, Bellary, which always lagged in record, was this time credited with 64 persons who were considered to be veritable menace to the security of the realm.

Nor did the over-enthusiasm of the officials go unrewarded. Three of the Circle Inspectors in the district were granted an additional salary of Rs. 25 per mensem in recognition of meritorious services rendered by them. One District Superintendent of Police who was alleged to have leniently dealt with the movement was suddenly transferred.

The movement is believed to have been very strong in Karnatak too. If a high-souled patriot and publicist inspired by spirit of service and adventure arranges for collection and publication of the data on a scientific basis, he would certainly have a scoop. Many of the persons who went underground baffled the vigorous search by the police in spite of the fact that fabulous sums of money were being offered for information that would lead to their arrest. In some villages in Karnatak the British Rule was not at all in existence for several days on account of the movement.

One noticeable feature in Bombay Karnatak was the annoying and procrastinating tendency on the part of the police in the matter of launching and conducting prosecutions. Prisoners were kept as under-trials for periods exceeding about two years, periods which were likely to exceed the probable terms of imprisonment or conviction.

Another interesting feature which must necessarily attract the attention of the people was that a majority of prosecution launched by the police was either discharged or acquitted. There have been many known and unknown heroes in the Karnatak to whom the country's freedom was very breath of their nostrils. A true disciple of Mahatma, the late Mahadebappa of Dharwar district, who had undergone training in the Sabarmati Ashram and was one of the 80 Ashramites who accompanied the Mahatma in his famous Dundee march of 1930 plunged heart and soul into the movement. On 1st April 1943 he along with two of his companions, like a brave non-violent soldier faced the bullets at the hands of the police and embraced death with joy.



## TENALI.

Tenali also came into lime light during the August Movement. Tenali is in the heart of the Guntur district which has always been in the vanguard of the freedom movement.

It was the 12th of August the members of the A. I. C. C. had returned a day before and conveyed to the public Gandhiji's message of 'Do or Die' and explained the 'Quit India' resolution passed by the Congress. As a mark of protest against the Government's provocative actions against the Congress leaders, complete *hartal* was observed. Students stayed away from schools. A small crowd consisting mostly of young boys marched through the main streets raising slogans. They then entered the railway station and virtually took possession of the whole premises. Booking clerks were asked to quit their places as also every other servants and officers in the railway station. Policemen were made to put down their headgears and depart. Nobody seemed to make any serious objection. The administration became helpless before the groups of unarmed young boys. Everything of value in the station was smashed to the ground. The wine bottle in the Spencer's Refreshment Room were broken to pieces, the telephone and other apparatus were damaged beyond repairs. Telegraph wires were cut. Availing themselves of the Kerosene and petrol—stored nearby, the main building was set fire to. The tickets and cash in the counters were thrown all into the fire. They had absolutely no use for the bundles of currency notes which were promptly consigned to the blaze. Very soon the whole station heaped up in a huge flame sending forth its tongues to lick the surface of the sky. Meanwhile the passenger train from Madras arrived and stopped far away from the station as the signals were not in order. The driver, guard, and passengers, among them a few Englishmen, were asked to get down and were safely escorted outside; the bogies were then set fire to.

After having done their 'job' the demonstrators withdrew from the scene. But the spectators and sightseers began to

swell and a crowd gathered near the bus-stand not far from the railway line. All the while, it seemed, as though the alien Government had suspended its activities. No signs were visible at any rate of its existence. Attempts to get in touch with the district authorities at Guntur might have been made, but all telephone and telegraphic communications had failed. It seems the local Power Station sent a message to Guntur as its wires were not tampered with.

The District Magistrate and the District Superintendent of Police with a bus-load of armed reserved police arrived at 12 noon on the day of occurrence on the scene near the bus-stand where the people had gathered in a crowd. The District Magistrate asked them to disperse but they paid no heed to what he said. He warned and threatened to open fire in case they did not disperse. The crowd remained absolutely peaceful while they turned deaf ears to his threats and did not budge an inch from the place. They actually saw before their eyes the police loading their guns with cartridges. The Police were very few in number but still the people neither attempted any violence against the police nor moved away from the place. The District Magistrate then ordered to open fire on the crowd and the District Superintendent was the first to let loose the first shot. Five fell down dead instantly, two succumbed to the injuries later and five were severely wounded. When the District Superintendent of Police threatened that he would shoot, a young man stood erect before him holding out his chest and said "Alright shoot me". Out went the shot and the brave young man fell down dead. One of the dead persons was a local advocate who went into the crowd after speaking to the District Magistrate in order to persuade the crowd to disperse. It was a horrible sight to see the dead and the dying at the place of occurrence. The Police seemed to be more busy in glorifying themselves in their actions than bringing succour to the dying. Their attitude smacked of vindictiveness but showed no inkling of grace or chivalry.

For months after the occurrence white military personnel

were stationed and they used to go round the towns armed with guns and pistols in order to strike terror in the hearts of the people. Everyone was to the mercy of the police. A great deal of harrassment took place. Many had been arrested and kept in the lockup and several were prosecuted before a Special Court staged for the purpose.

A collective fine of Rs. 2 lakhs had been imposed on the citizens of Tenali being the largest amount inflicted upon any town in India. Coercive measures and numerous tactics had been adopted in the imposition and collection of the fine. The property of those who refused to pay was seized, attached and auctioned.

For the last three yeas, 12th August has been observed as the 'Martyrs Day' in Tenali, when ruthless oppression was carried on to suppress India's attempt to break the shackles of alien bondage.

On the morning of September 14, 1942 Mr. How, an Englishman in his capacity as the Superintendent of Alipuram Camp Jail ordered a lathi charge on 250 political prisoners including some of the eminent men of South India, a few lawyers, some doctors, a good many graduates and university students in a block of the Jail. The fateful day had a quiet beginning. There was a petty quarrel between a prisoner and a jail warden but nothing serious. Suddenly a whistle was heard and jail-wardens from all directions were soon running to the block whistling and shouting. The Superintendent, the jailer and others appeared suddenly on the scene and a batch of police constables with guns and bayonets stood to attention. The Superintendent gave the order and a lathi charge began. Terrific sound of agonising shricks was heard as the lathis felled prisoners like trees in a forest. Stronger victims tried to rise up only to fall back in a pool of blood with wounds on their back. These sights were unbearable to those who were inside the block. The Superintendent had always his left hand on the pistol ready to shoot in case of opposition. The party went round beating every man till he fell down. Even the prisoners inside the latrine were not spared and had their share of beating there.

Suddenly wardens ordered the prisoners to assemble in the central room which they did. The Superintendent then ordered a lathi charge there but every one of them bore the cruel punishment unmoved and manfully in his seat. If one had risen up one's head would have been broken surely. The prisoners were forced to receive blows on all parts of their bodies irrespective of any consideration. All of the prisoners were then asked to get out of the block probably to meet the rest who had been lying down on the ground outside. On both sides of the doorway wardens were placed to give blows as they went out. The prisoners were then asked to stand in rows of four which they did excepting those whose failed to function on account of injuries. The prisoners were ordered to be drilled but they failed. Once having risen up they could not sit down as their limbs were aching and wounds were bleeding profusely. But constables whipped and whipped and the drilling was carried out. This is only a picture of that ghastly scene which will remain ever alive as a painful cancer in the minds of all those prisoners who were victims of that monstrous and hasty attacks and historians will not forget that ugly stain of British Belsen tactics.

### MADRAS

The students of Madras woke up one fine Sunday morning to hear the startling news of the arrest of Gandhiji, Azad, Nehru, Patel and scores of other national leaders. It was August 9, 1942. A Pearl Harbour attack had been launched by the Government against the Congress. With the rest of India, the Madras students rose up as one man to shake the Linlithgowian Government to its very foundation. A meeting of the Madras Students' organization was immediately held, a rude shock awaited the excited students when the resolution calling for a strike in all the colleges in the city till the release of the national leaders was opposed by the vociferous communist clique unfortunately occupying responsible posts in the organization. The students had been

formally assured by these groups of hypocrites that while they would oppose the 'Quit India' resolution till it was passed they would surely be in the vanguard of the national movement once the resolution was passed by a majority in the A. I. C. C. But on the very first day of the historic revolution these gangs of traitors gave a deadly stab in the back of the nationalist force. Vainly did the treacherous Communists trot out their arguments parrot-like about national unity, national defence and national Government in order to divert the attention of the students from the real issue. The students had no patience to listen to Maxwell-Jinnah-Joshi slogans designed as these were, to stem the spontaneous tide of national struggle and to take advantage of filthy opportunism but they threw themselves heart and soul into the rushing currents of national upsurge. The next day, August 10th, saw the whole educational system of the Government of Madras being completely paralysed by waves of strikes that spread like a great tornado even to the nooks and corners of the province. The students came out in their tens and thousands and began to put themselves in touch with the masses of the city so that the latter might be awakened from their slumber and might harness their energies to action. But unfortunately, the people of Madras cannot to-day boast of having faced a teargas attack while Aruna Asaf Ali hoisted the national flag. This attitude of the people of the city however did not deter the students from carrying on their campaign enthusiastically. While the officers of the Government wended their way to the Secretariat, each pointing out to the other the press statement issued by Rajaji calling for a stoppage of all activities against the Government, the labourers were being actuated to go to their work by the so called protagonists of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the students remained firm in their determination and went out in thousands in one of the most memorable processions decrying the British raj. Threats and coercion having proved futile the 'Jo-hukoom' police of the Sircar indulged in one of the most brutal lathi charges injuring many innocent and unarmed fighters of freedom.

This only helped the students to steel their determination to carry on the struggle. The shrewd Madras Government refrained from giving any further provocation to the students lest the movement should gain greater strength. Day after day the principals and professors of all colleges waited in vain for the students to enter the class-rooms. The calming down of the atmosphere in and around other parts of the country had its own lulling effect on the Madras students as well.

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PART VII  
NATIVE STATES





## NATIVE STATES

In the battle for Freedom that was launched with the adoption of the "Quit India Resolution" of the Congress the Deccan States people played a distinguished part.

When the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and others reached Kolhapur, all people there spontaneously observed complete hartal. Meetings and processions to express protest against the arrest of the national leaders were held. Thousands of labourers in mills and innumerable students took part enthusiastically in the meetings.

On August 13, 1942, the Kolhapur State People's Conference demanded immediate responsible Government in the State in a meeting attended by more than 20,000 people. In not less than 24 hours from the declaration of this decision, Mr. Madhavrao Bagal, Chairman of Kolhapur Praja Parishad and about 20 other workers were arrested. Warrants to arrest a number of students and workers were issued. But nevertheless demonstrations continued both in the city and villages of the State. In the meanwhile a deputation waited upon H. H. the Maharani of Kolhapur and urged upon her to grant full responsible Government to the State. But the deputation received little attention. The Executive Committee of the Praja Parishad decided on October 18, 1942 to launch the battle for Freedom and the Students' organisation also co-operated. Immediately prosecution against 50 persons were taken up. At the very commencement of the movement an ordinance banning public meetings and processions in the state was promulgated. A special court to try the cases of the agitators was appointed and was abolished only when such courts were decided to be illegal in British India. After the abolition of the special court the number of the Sessions courts was increased. A number of special and additional judges was appointed. Some pamphlets issued in this con-\*

nection were seized. Authorities began to check the attendance of boys in schools. Restrictions were imposed on newspapers in Kolhapur.

Raids on 26 Chavadis, four bungalows, two offices, three railway stations, three Postal Offices took place. Telegraphic wires were cut at five places. Bags of six postal runners were looted. Raids on three schools and three mail vans took place. The statue of Sir Leslie Wilson, Ex-Governor of Bombay was disfigured. Eight bomb explosions took place. Gargoti and Burmese Treasuries were looted. About 100 cases in connection with the various offences relating to the movement had been filed. More than 350 persons were arrested from various villages in Kolhapur. Collective fines on Patankudi, Beed, Sagaon, Nimshirgaon, Vasagade, Tavandalage, Korochi, Talandage, Vadgaon, etc., amounting to Rs. 44,450 were imposed. Punitive Police was posted on Sagaon. The people of Sagaon attacked in broad daylight the police station and looted dress and guns of policemen. The workers in this movement had been sentenced from 5 to 15 years' R. I. By the end of December 1944, three hundred workers were in jail, some of whom have been recently released. During the two years following August 1942, about 1000 people from 80 villages were arrested. A number of political prisoners broke out of the jails. Mr Ratnappa Kumbhar, General Secretary, the Kolhapur Praja Parishad has been absconding since August 1942. An award of Rs. 2000/- has been announced for his arrest. His property has been confiscated. About 200 persons absconded at the commencement of the movement. In the battle of Freedom in Kolhapur, 230 political offences took place, 1000 people were arrested, 352 people were sentenced. The Government lost Rs. 81,797 by way of damages. The amount of fine which individuals had to pay was Rs. 20,000. There were 100 cases of sabotages. Sixteen young brave persons succumbed to death in Kolhapur.

With the arrest of the political leaders on August 8, 1942, Miraj observed complete hartal. Schools and colleges

were closed. The District Magistrate imposed ban on public meetings and processions. Mr Charu Datta Patil, Chairman, Miraj State People's Conference, requested the Ruler of Miraj Senior to sever his connections with the British Government and to grant immediate responsible Government. But no reply was received by the Praja Parishad to its ultimatum. Hence the Praja Parliament decided to launch Civil Disobedience movement. Early in the morning of August 22, 1942, Mr B. V. Shikhare, the Veteran politician and worker in the Deccan States and the General Secretary of the Deccan States People's Conference and Mr C. A. Patil were arrested. Later on Mr Shete was arrested and detained. Mr Madhavrao Kulkarni, S. A. Chivate, G. S. Lakade from Miraj and Mr Rambhau Sutar, S. G. Sawant, Hulye Shankar Bhamane, Bhupal Mali, etc., along with about 10 persons from Malgaon were arrested. After the arrest of these leaders a compromise was reached between the Miraj State People's Conference and the Miraj Government. The Miraj Government agreed to appoint a Committee to draft a constitution for the Miraj State and the Praja Parishad agreed to withdraw its request urging the Ruler to sever connection with the British Government.

According to this compromise all detenus except Mr B. V. Shikhare were released. Mr Shikhare who continued to be under the detention of the Miraj State undertook a fast for 15 days in the Miraj City Jail. He requested the Ruler, firstly, to sell the grains to the poor and half-fed subjects at a cheap rate and secondly, he urged the Ruler to grant dearness allowance to the low paid servants of the State. The Miraj State did not accept Mr Shikhare's demands. But after a few months, dearness allowance was granted to the State servants. Mr Shikhare was then transferred from Miraj to Nasik jail and was released about six months ago.

Mr Rambhau Sutar was arrested in connection with the burning of the Barsi Light Railway Station and he succumbed to death due to Cholera in Karad jail. Mr Tamgave, Mr Gadave, Desai and Patil were arrested in connection with the Digrahas

Mail Bag looting case and have now been released on parole. Mr J. D. Patil was arrested in Bombay and sentenced to three month's simple imprisonment and was fined Rupees twentyfive. Mr C. A. Patil after his release from Miraj Jail was arrested again by the Miraj Railway Police and was released unconditionally after about a month or so as there was no evidence against him. The property of Mr J. D. Patil of Kupwad was attached. Mr Bhau Viroje and Krishno Todkar of Malgaon are still absconding. The residence and the landed property of Mr Viroje was attached by the Miraj State. Mr Jirgale, Mr Yeshwant Kulkarni and Mr Nagu Shiralkar are still in jail undergoing their sentences in Kolhapur State.

Bomb explosions took place at Malgaon. Postal bags from Miraj to Malgaon were twice looted. Mr K. C. Apte, the leading journalist of Miraj was arrested but later on released as the charge against him could not be proved.

The attempt to throw a bomb on Lord Linlithgow and another attempt to dynamite the special train carrying Lord Wavell (then Commander-in-Chief), the formation of a guerilla band, and the construction of an 'Arms Factory' in an Indian State are some of the highlights of the story now made available of the doings of the patriots who went underground after August 9, 1942.

'Sabotage movement's which was started by them, began to show signs of waning after a month of its start. It was then that the leaders of underground movement who had assembled at Delhi took steps to revive the morale of the people and to 'keep the fire burning'. The country was divided into several zones and the work in each of them was entrusted to a band of workers. While Bombay undertook to finance the 'movement', Bihar was in the 'vanguard of the fight'.

The 'Shadow Working Committee' formed at Delhi held long deliberations regarding the shape which the movement was to take. Some of the members led by Acharya Jugul Kishore, it is said, did not approve of the action of the people burning Government property and causing derailments. He

is reported to have advanced the view that Satyagraha should be offered on purely Gandhian lines. This advice did not commend itself to the majority of the assembled workers. Under the circumstances the old mode of work continued, but by then the first gush of enthusiasm in the people had subsided.

There were also differences amongst the workers as some were in favour of a 'short range programme' which aimed at putting the Government to immediate loss by diverse means, whilst there were others who stood for a 'long-range programme', that aimed, amongst others, at raising a guerilla band. But the Bombay bosses who had been financing the movement were in favour of 'short range programme'.

The executors of this programme once tried to stage a spectacular incident by throwing a bomb on Lord Linlithgow, then the Viceroy of India, but the plan failed. They, it is said, had come to know that Linlithgow would visit a particular cinema at Delhi, and accordingly placed a time bomb underneath the Viceregal box. The Viceroy, it is further said, did visit a cinema but not the one in which the bomb had been placed. There was a great sensation in the city when the bomb exploded.

• There was another attempt on the life of Lord Wavell but that too could not materialise. It is said that the saboteurs came to know that Lord Wavell was proceeding in a special train from Delhi to Bombay. After the first pilot train had passed, they placed a dynamite stick on the railway track under the impression that the train carrying Lord Wavell would thereby be blown up. But as fate would have it there came a second pilot engine which was damaged by the dynamite stick. On its discovery the route of the Special train was changed.

The saboteurs, it is reported, got their supply of arms and ammunition from some of the Indian States of Rajputana. As a matter of fact, they constructed an 'Arms Factory' in one such Indian State. It was during this period that a bomb explosion took place at the residence of the Inspector General

of Police of that particular State. After this incident the promoters of the said Arms Factory had to leave the State within 24 hours.

The saboteurs also received their supplies of arms from some of the foreign soldiers then posted in India. They were even able to secure two tommy guns from them besides a large number of rifles and pistols. Some foreigners, it is said, also provided them with a field transmitter. A rumour also prevailed at the time that Jai Prakash Narain wanted to go to Russia via Nepal presumably with a view to secure foreign aid for Indian independence but that too could not materialise.

The strength of the underground workers during October 1942, it is surmised, was three to four thousand throughout India. It is also said that some of the service personnel including the police and the C. I. D. helped the saboteurs by giving them valuable information and thus prevented their early arrest.

## KOTTAH

How the people of Kottah captured the city in August 1942 and ruled over it for three days in a way which excited admiration even from the official circles and how the Ruler had to send his personal emissary to negotiate with the leaders of the people on terms that police and military should immediately vacate the city in which the people consented without shedding a drop of blood of their adversaries, is now a story that has passed into a legend and has been celebrated in songs in the states of Rajputana and Central India.

The tremors of the August upheaval were felt at Kottah on the morning of the 9th August. Processions of about half a mile long and mammoth meetings were organised in spite of ban on them. The tempo mounted daily. On the 13th August police 'invited' some prominent leaders for 'friendly discussions' in the police kotwali and arrested them. The wife of one of the arrested leaders was badly manhandled and the crowd which gathered outside the Kotwali was lathi-

charged. Several were injured. The next day the police opened fire. This infuriated the masses who captured the city walls. The massive gates were closed, blocking entrances to the city ; guns traditionally kept on the corners of the city walls were also captured. Seeing this all the police garrisons in the Kotwali decided to surrender and the tricolour flew proudly over it while the police station was rechristened as the Swaraj Bhavan.

Military was summoned from outside ; but as it marched towards it, found the city gates closed. Eventually it was taken into the city through the river by boat and was faced with the peaceful crowds crying 'Gandhiji-ki-jay', 'Hindusthan-azad-hai'. The Military was ordered to open fire but it refused to do so, notwithstanding the threat of serious action against it.

At this stage the Ruler of the Kottah sent his personal emissary to negotiate with the people. As a gesture of good will on the demand of the people, military forces were immediately removed and they marched after saluting the tri-colour flag flying over the erstwhile police station. 'People's Raj' was there. They appointed Magistrates, kotwals, and grain shop officers. Volunteers corps patrolled the city day and night. The popular organisation was praised even afterwards by highly placed officials and compared with the Paris Commune.

As a result of the negotiations, the arrested leaders were released and responsible government was promised, though alas, it was afterwards conveniently forgotten ! The Prime Minister and the Inspector General of Prisons, responsible for the firing and lathi charge, had to resign within a month.

Kottah's three days' rule under the people of the State can stand, in point of brilliance, comparison with patriotic struggle of 1942 in other parts of India.





**PART VIII**  
**CENTRAL INDIA STATES**



# CENTRAL INDIA STATES

The people's experience in the States of Central India 1942 records a tale when instead of moving towards greater freedom and more civil liberties and reforms in constitutional fields, the States administrations increased autocratic and personal rule, hardened their restrictions on the people through Defence of India Rules and other orders, and thus deprived the people of the very things for which the Allies were said to be fighting—namely, Freedom and democracy.

The most deplorable and widespread feature of this period had been the hardships suffered by the common people through high prices, inflation and forced denials. Scarcity of small coins, unavailability of foodgrains, which caused several food riots as at Suthalia, Jaora, Mandasor (Gwalior State) starvation, malaria, cholera etc. were matters of daily experience. Although most of the Central India States were surplus regions in food-grains still the common people experienced food shortage, and although there were sufficient cloth mills the common people had to go ill-clothed. At industrial centres like, Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal, Gwalior and Ratlam the labour class had to go on strike for getting their economic grievances redressed.

In most of the Centres, the labourer in spite of the Communist opposition, sympathised with the August Movement and on several occasions they joined the processions, meetings and protest demonstrations by declaring complete hartals in Mills. In the first phase, the communists failed in controlling the labourers ; but, gradually, with the help of the State machinery in some centres they were successful in their anti-national activities. During the movement, most of the States permitted profiteering through their permits, etc., and many States indulged in profiteering directly through their own departments, creating thereby a monopoly of the purchase and sale of the food-grains and other things, in its own selfish interests.

## GWALIOR

Students took a leading part in the movement all over the States. Hartals, processions, peaceful demonstrations were organised by students at Ujjain, Lashkar and other towns of the State. Colleges and schools remained closed for weeks and months together. A peaceful procession of the Students at Ujjain was attacked by the Bohras at Ujjain resulting in a serious disturbance and the looting of some shops. The Sarwanik Sabha passed through its General Committee on 23rd August '42 a resolution calling upon the Maharaja to sever relations with its Paramount Power and to establish Responsible Government immediately. An ultimatum upto 30th August was given by the President, but the Sabha leaders and workers were arrested even before the date of the ultimatum. There was a general round up of important workers through out the State by students and by other general public, when Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and other leaders were arrested. The disturbance created by the Bohras of Ujjain was immediately brought under control by the authorities by promulgating Section 144 and curfew order in the City area.

On the 16th August a cruel lathi charge was made on a students' demonstration in Lashkar. The people of Ujjain, along with the students and labourers, were picketting the State courts and for one week they were successful in their action. All the courts and offices were closed for the whole week. Even the Police lorries and the Jail lorry bringing the undertrial prisoners were turned back as several thousand people were picketting on the road leading to the courts. But on the 8th September Section 144 was promulgated and a lathi charge was made on peaceful men and women and children in Sarafa, Patni Bazar, Chowk Kanthal, Naipeth and other neighbouring Mohallas. Terror was let loose all over the city and armed Police force was picketting important market centres and Bazars for nearly two weeks. The people carefully demonstrated their protest by observing more than two weeks. The people carefully demonstrated their protest

by observing more than two weeks' Hartal in the City. The public demanded an enquiry but to no effect. There were lathi charges at other places also. At Moran civil disobedience was offered against the prohibition of meetings by several persons for several days.

Liquor shops and warehouses were peacefully picketted at Bhilsa, Shujalpur, etc.

At Rampur, jungle-cutting as a programme of Satyagraha was conducted by a large number of villagers. In all more than 253 persons were arrested and were kept in different jails of the State. The whole movement ended by the second week of September. Later on there were differences and doubts amongst the persons who went to jail and a group of workers pressed that there should be settlement. The communists moved in the matter and acted as mediators between the detained workers and the Government machinery. The Working Committee of the Sabha met in the jail and agreed to the following proposal: "Under the present circumstances it is decided to stop the movement as resolved in the Bhilsa Central Committee of 23rd August '42." Accordingly all political prisoners numbering about 100 were released after a period of nearly nine months time.

## INDORE

Just after the arrests of the leaders there was much popular demonstration in Indore. The shopkeepers of the bazar and students went on strike. The Congress Committee workers, student workers, labourers joined the movement. The Prajamandal workers too joined them. The police groups paraded the streets and dispersed crowds. On the 16th of August the Prajamandal passed a resolution supporting the A. I. C. C. resolution and appointed a dictator. An ultimatum of 48 hours was given by the dictator to the Maharaja for severing relations with the Paramount Power and immediate establishment of full Responsible Government. The Maharaja did reply within time but he did not fulfil the demand.

Thereafter regular Satyagraha was launched commen-

cing on the evening of 19th August. Students, labourers and congressites—all supported and joined the movement. Indore Government declared the Prajamandal illegal. For about a month or more there were enthusiastic activities, but later slackness became apparent.

In all about 500 persons were arrested. Indore City was most active. In Mandaleshwar Jail the political prisoners broke open the jail gate, in protest of the excess being committed on some fellow political prisoners, went along a road of the town and again came back to jail. All these persons were sentenced for this Act.

During the period of movement the police made several lathi charges and on two or three occasions there were firing also, but no deaths occurred. For 8 or 9 months together the Prajamandal Patrika was published defying the ban of publication on it. The Government machinery failed in detecting the source of printing and the machine which cyclostyled it.

After declaring the Prajamandal illegal the Maharaja left for America. While going to America the Maharaja had handed over charge of his administration to the Maharaja Vikramsingh Ruler of Dewas Senior. Maharaja Vikramsingh tried to negotiate with the Prajamandal leaders but he was removed and Raja Gyannath was made Prime Minister of Indore, in spite of the fact that the Maharaja, while leaving for America, had abolished this post.

When the Maharaja returned from America, some negotiations were started and the result was that all the politicals were released on 29th November 1943. After a long time the Prajamandal was made legal and the Patrika was allowed to be published. The Prajamandal fought Legislative Council and Municipal election and has been able to secure a majority of the seats.

## **BHOPAL**

During the August Movement the Bhopal State People's Conference passed a resolution calling upon the Nawab Sahib to sever relations with the British Government and to establish

responsible government and a time limit was given for this purpose. The leader of the Bhopal people Mr. Shakirali Khan was arrested along with some other workers and were prosecuted. All except two were heavily sentenced. Mr. Altat Yazdani a worker who was arrested in connection with August Revolution in October '42 developed T. B. in Jail and was released when his condition became precarious. He died on the 29th April 1943 after his release. Suppression of civil liberties had continued for a long time. The students of Bhopal demonstrated on some occasions their sympathy with the August Movement but the State suppressed all such activities with undreamt of severities.

The August Movement was reflected in Dhar State also. The students remained on strike for nearly one month. Student leaders were arrested. When the Lokparishad made its political demands the leaders were arrested and the Lokparishad was declared illegal. After 25 days there was a compromise and all the arrested persons were released. But the institution remained illegal.

In Ratlam, Sitamau, Jhabua, Bundelkhand States some demonstrations and hartals were organised by students and States' People Conference workers but the States concerned suppressed all such activities. In Rajgarh State the grain problem took a serious turn when the merchants at Suthalia fired on starving people who had gathered in the bazar and were demanding grain, resulting in three deaths and many injuries. The food situation in Jaora too, had become so serious that a food riot occurred and fire was opened to quell the people.

The Imperial Government at Delhi commenced their 'Pearl Harbour' attack at Gowalia Maidan on the morning of August 9, 1942, and casualties of that attack included the President of the Cochin State Praja Mandal.

The Gowalia Maidan presented a tense and animated appearance on the morning of that famous 9th of August. The whisper had gone round that the leaders who were



expected to assemble at that Maidan to conduct a review of the National Volunteers on parade, had all been spirited away before the dawn of that day. The volunteers specially the Desasevikas, in their attractive orange robes had all assembled on that maidan in ordered rows. But the Police were more prominently present on the spot than on the two previous evenings and had attracted perhaps a larger crowd for that early morning function. There was only a very small knot of leaders around the flag staff. T. S. Avansilingam Chettiar, M. L. A. from Coimbatore, C. K. Govindan Nair, M. L. A., from Kerala and their two friends took up their positions a few yards away from the flag staff.

At once a European Sergeant approached the most important personality of that group of four and informed him that "the Maidan was under military possession and that it should be cleared of the volunteers and others at once or else tear gas would be used against them". S. Neelakanta Iyer the President of the Cochin State Praja Mandal told him that he was not the person in charge of that function and that the officer should inform the right person. The officer took note of these words and went away and gave orders to the police to disperse at once. Sri Iyer in spite of his reply to the officer informed Srimati Aruna Asaf Ali about the Sergeant's order and volunteers who had already taken up their position might disperse if they like to save them from the police excesses. All the children present marched out and as a preliminary to the flag hoisting Aruna began her speech.

Meanwhile the dispersed policemen gathered again on the maidan but a new vehicle had made its appearance along with them. All of them put on their hideous looking gas masks taken out of the wagon. They then took in their hands the small gas container. The Officer gave one more order to clear but no body budged even an inch. Aruna had finished her speech by then, and the National Flag had gone up on the pole and began to flutter high in the air.

The Policemen then threw the gas containers on the assembly of volunteers on the maidan. The 'Pearl Harbour'

atrocities of India, if such term is admissible, thus commenced. But the captain of the volunteer corps gave order, "All lie down." All the volunteers and others lay close to the ground. In two minutes the whole assembly was up on its feet again. Then there was a second attack by the police which also proved equally ineffective. The Police changed their tactics. They gave up the tear gas and took to lathis. Some volunteer leaders were taken into police custody. The crowd began to disperse under the weight of lathi blows. Sri Iyer received two blows on his upper arm as he was clearing the tears from his burning eyes. Mridula Ben, or Mahi Ben Patel, who was also on the scene got her baptism of blows on the occasion and told Sri Iyer not to get arrested there but to convey the message of the Congress to his part of the country.

The President and Secretary of the Praja Mandal met soon after, at their Bombay quarters and drafted their letter to His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin to put himself at the head of the movement for Indian Independence so far as his people were concerned.

The President was the first Congressman from Bombay A. I. C. C. to reach Kerala and to communicate the message to the congress workers of Malabar and Cochin State. The news of his return had spread like wild fire among the people. They expected to hear the Congress message direct from his lips and had assembled in vast crowds in the famous Trichur Maidan on the evening of August 15th. The police were also most aggressively in evidence.

No sooner had a few words fallen from the lips of Sri Iyer than he was arrested. A stone from the crowd hit his right eye lid causing profuse bleeding. Thus he was wounded for a second time. The police at Trichur were more cruel to the crowded people than even the Bombay Police on the Gowalia Maidan. Nothing else could have so effectively aroused the spirit of resistance of the people of Cochin.

In all about 140 were arrested, detained or tried. This record may be considered satisfactory in reference to a State

having a population of 14 lakhs. Among the sons of Cochin who participated in this movement Bombay may be able to recognise two who were not sent to the Cochin Jail. Dr. K. B. Menon was an inspiring guide and philosopher to the Congress workers of Kerala during the movement. The other was Sri Matthai Manjuran whose fiery spirit was a source of inspiration to many a Cochin youth. Both worked not only within the Cochin area but were the guiding spirits in Malabar and Travancore.

**PART IX**

**BIHAR**



# BIHAR

The August Movement of 1942 forms the most important chapter of the glorious history of India's struggle for freedom. The forces of freedom engendered in 1857 displayed what stupendous strength it had gathered during all these years in the freedom movement of 1942. A gigantic volcano irrupted and released a vast mass of lava which inundated the country from one end to the other.

The movement was a spontaneous bid of the Indian masses to throw off the yoke of slavery—the bursting of a boiler no longer able to contain the steam within its bowels. Viewed in this perspective, the future historian of India would undoubtedly adjudge the August Movement as by far the greatest struggle for Independence in history and the year 1942 as the brightest signal post in the annals of mankind.

In this historic struggle, Bihar played its part in a manner which will be regarded as the greatest glory of her life and her magnificent achievement. It is not possible to give even a complete outline of how the movement developed in Bihar, within the short compass of this modest volume. Reference is made here only to certain salient features of the movement and to some of the more important events.

. In the midst of mounting tension and accumulating exasperation, the Congress Working Committee met in Bombay and the choked voice and pent up feelings of a suppressed nation found expression in the famous August Resolution. The 'Quit India' slogan represented its spirit and soul, and the country was thrilled by its significance and hypnotised by its charm. The arrest of the members of the Congress Working Committee before giving Mahatma Gandhi a chance to meet the Viceroy, signalised the British offensive, and the elaborate precautions which bureaucratic thoroughness and imperialistic ingenuity had devised to throttle the movement before it went out of control served only to add fuel to

the smouldering fire. The Government action stirred and revitalised it, and the unrest revealed itself with a degree of intensity which neither the people nor the Government had ever foreseen or expected.

Bihar has always been in the forefront of the fight for freedom and she could not lag behind on that momentous and critical occasion. Students, who always form the spear-head of a country's advance were mobilising themselves and were ready to go into action at the shortest notice. So were the common people. As soon as the news of the arrest of the Congress leaders in Bombay was released, excitement rose to unprecedented heights. The response was spontaneous. Groups of students pooled themselves into a pioneering force and started demonstrations on August 9. They marched at the head of a huge procession which swelled step by step as it proceeded towards the Government House at Patna. By 6 P.M. the marchers were no fewer than 50,000 strong, shouting slogans which rent the sky. It was a most orderly and peaceful demonstration inspite of its heterogeneous composition and vast numbers. The gates of Government House faced for the first time a multitude and the doors and the windows of the official residence of the British satrap in Bihar rattled under the stress of the "Quit India" slogan. These were unprecedented scenes in the metropolis. But it was only the beginning.

#### FIRST BLOOD DRAWN

Patna like the rest of Bihar was pulsating with a new vigour. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with intense patriotism and enthusiasm, ready to sweep everything before it. The arrest of all the prominent leaders including that prince among patriot, the idol of the people, Deshratna Rajendra Prasad, proved too much. Deprived of the guidance of their trusted leaders who were all clapped inside prison walls, the people became their own leaders and planned for action as it pleased them. On August 11, a mammoth crowd gathered around the Secretariat, the gates of which were

closely guarded by a strong contingent of mounted and Gurkha police. The crowd demanded right of passage to hoist the Congress flag on the Secretariat and the Assembly buildings. This was resisted by the authorities. The crowd was peaceful all along, and while it was planning to return, the District Magistrate of Patna with the concurrence of the police authorities created a new situation. He is said to have ordered the people to disperse, but his words could not be heard in the tumult of the crowd. The formality of a warning being over, the Gurkhas fired two volleys, without firing blank shots by way of warning. Several young men, mostly students received bullet wounds in their chests and heads and the asphalt roads near the Secretariat gate were wet with the blood of the youthful martyrs. The wounded were taken to the hospital with all haste, but no amount of surgeons' care could save their lives. The firing took a toll of ten precious lives. The Government had drawn the first blood of the August Revolution which cost the province on the calculation of Congress leaders as many as 600 deaths by firings alone. The whole town was in mourning. And martyrs' blood was not given in vain. It paved the way for the new movement and lent speed and momentum to it as nothing else could do. A strange coincidence occurred at the time of the firing. No sooner had the guns sent forth their bullets and touched their victims than a National Flag shot up over the Central Block of the Assembly buildings as if by magic and fluttered majestically in the air. The people had achieved their objective and it was left to the police to unearth the mystery of this flag-hoisting in spite of their greatest vigilance. ,

The news of the Secretariat firing was thrown across three columns by the *Indian Nation* and that very night there came a warning on the editor from the Press Adviser limiting and directing the typographical display of such news in the local papers as related to firings by police. Later, interferences in the working of the daily newspapers reached a stage when even the moderate *Indian Nation* with a most moderate editor in Mr. C. V. H. Rao had to refuse to be



guided by the Press Adviser in the matter of publication of news. Government of the day insisted on publication of its own damaging and one-sided press notes and altogether refused the version of press correspondents going into the paper without censorship and not without deletion of important facts. Thus the first casualty after the death of ten students in Bihar was Truth. The local press retaliated by refusing even to publish Government Press notes and matters came to such a head as compelled the Government to publish their own daily sheet under the title the *Patna Daily News*. This paper was entirely Government run and it printed one-sided stories of what Government wanted to tell the people withholding all unpalatable parts, oftentimes suppressing the popular and the correct versions.

The report of the firing in Patna spread quickly in all directions and added point and poignancy to the movement. The arrest of the leaders had already outraged public feeling and the blood of the martyrs called for greater action. In the metropolis telephone and telegraph wires were completely mutilated and the roads were blockaded by the massive branches of roadside trees. And if electricity and water supply were not tampered with during the movement it was only because the people were advised to let them alone in their own interest. Railway bridges were dislocated and rails were removed over long distances. Trains were stopped and crowds collected to prevent them from proceeding further so that loss of lives due to accidents might be avoided. There were wild scenes here, there and everywhere, and the great upheaval, the tremendous upsurge of patriotic feeling—was simply bewildering. The conflagration was rapidly extending and the movement, like a self-propelled weapon, was going on at top speed. The steam-roller of mass activity crushed anything and everything that raised its head and tried to obstruct its passage. All looked aghast and stupefied at the happenings and could hardly realise that the man in the street was writing in blood of sacrifice the history of the greatest of all revolutions in the world.

## PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

In most parts of the province, attempts were made, and in some cases successfully, to form a parallel administration. It did not, however continue very long in face of the extent of repression that was set in motion.

The greatest handicap of this spontaneous movement was the presence of an abnormally large number of British and Allied troops in India at the moment. Government lost no time in drafting this force to 'disturbed areas' and very soon the juggernaut of British might was busy with its wheels. Large contingents came over to Patna, established their Head Quarters and organised an emergency wireless service. They started patrolling the whole area intent upon crushing the spirit of freedom and re-establishing British authority in India. They ushered a veritable reign of terror—beating, kicking and shooting at random "to teach the buggers a lesson". A rigorous Curfew order was imposed under the orders of the Army authorities and road barriers were set up through which none could pass even in day time without a permit. City life was completely paralysed and Patna presented a deserted look. From Patna, the troops fanned out in all directions and let loose their vendetta against unarmed people whose only crime was their patriotism. The police reinforced by the arrival of the military no longer coerced. They cheered up and saw their chance in the disturbed situation. The armed forces swooped down upon the province like a swarm of locusts. The shame of it is that even policemen in most cases were vying with the white forces in crushing the patriotic fervour of their own countrymen. It cannot be denied that mob fury in some parts, though after grave provocations, culminated in excesses. When the people in bondage desperately try to be free, it is impossible not to expect a huge inundation. But the atrocities of the troops far exceeded even the normal excesses. The battery of repression was set in action and the worst form of atrocities were perpetrated, mostly on innocent and unarmed people. Loot,

arson, rape, murder and in fact all forms of tyranny and oppression were committed without the least qualms of conscience. Civil authority had virtually abdicated in favour of the army, and wherever an executive officer raised his little head against the wanton cruelty of the soldier or ventured even so much as to open his lips, he was branded as a black-sheep and his head was demanded on a charger. Officers were completely demoralised and high encomiums were paid for oppression and heartlessness.

For a long time Bihar was cut off from the outside world and also fell into isolation. The Government introduced a system of air service to communicate with the mofussil officers, about whom nothing was known for days. Daily flights were undertaken for delivering to and carrying from Patna S. O. S. messages or distress signals. 'Hundreds of Thanas were demolished and there was no semblance of British authority in many areas for weeks together. Government itself was compelled to withdraw thana arrangements from inconvenient centres, which was tantamount to abdication.

At many places local officers bought their liberty by 'surrendering' to 'People's Government'. They were made to carry the National Flag and foreswear their allegiance to foreign Government. At one place an executive officer adopted an original plan of making good his escape in a 'badly effected area'. He is reported to have stealthily boarded a palanquin which was so camouflaged as to give the impression that a woman was inside. Many officers got over their predicament by responding to the people's demand. European officers had strange experiences and hundreds of them would have met their end but for the overwhelming goodness of the masses. At one place a European Officer adopted a trick. He shouted national slogans and with a tricolour in his hand, marched on at the head of a large crowd to the Jail premises, only to get most of them arrested and to save his own life. There were other instances of abuse of generosity

Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Purnea, Monghyr,

Bhagalpur, Patna, and Shahabad, these were the hot spots among the districts. Leaderless, the crowds marched up to police stations, and where officers-in-charge did not resist, nothing untoward happened. In some places, however, the police resisted often times opening fire, and with dead bodies among them, the mobs here and there lost self-control notably in Muzaffarpur district. Say what Government of the day would, the Bihar crowds showed admirable patience as a mob considering the temper and the passions of the mob-mind. There were instances where police officers shot down persons whose wives, sons, daughters and relations went up to officers-in-charge of thanas without either the spirit of revenge or blood. "We fight in the spirit of the *satyagrahi*. You have shown *himsa* but we shall not retaliate. We abide by the Mahatma's creed." And they carried off their dead to the cremation grounds.

What the people of Bihar did in the countrysides is beyond all human description and it would take pages and pages to describe them in details. There is but one example which will enable visualisation of the real conditions.

Scions of the famous house of Bhojpur who have been loyal to the British Government in Bihar live in Kuhuria. They even helped the British against their kith and kin in the 1857 Indian Revolution. When the present head of the family refused entrance to British tommy into his house he was shot at and injured by a revolver bullet. At first he paraded certificates from Her Imperial Majesty the Gracious Queen Victoria ! The tommies said they did not know her. He refused them passage into his house. He was sent sprawling to the ground and tommies marched into his house on search. Of course Sir Thomas Stewart apologised and he was sorry. But one can imagine how the defenceless folk fared. But defence was not always possible and neither men's valour nor women's honour escaped the British troops' vandalism.

If anywhere British troops met a match in Bihar it was in Saran and Shahabad. Here the population fought back

with the valour of a regimented army and when the rains were over it was no wonder that the scars of the combined police and military operations were left on every village and in almost every home. Saran and Shahabad are districts in Bihar where men value life in terms of fights won, in a spirit to hit back.

Wheresoever the British troops stopped there was marked the perimeter of Government's authority. The civil police, an important force in the circumstances, scouted the military authorities in towns or villages and had persons arrested, beaten, their homes looted, and eventually locked up on the brakes of military special trains which were stationary on the non-existing railway lines. After days of this kind of imprisonment some were let off with severe beatings, some with maimed bodies, some in the derangement and some there were never returned.

The *Mail* cites the case of Pandurang Natu brothers who were whisked off from Balhabaxar near Maheshkunt in Monghyr district by a group of tommies and to this day there has not been one word about the two young men either from the civil police or the military authorities. Pandurang Natu brothers are just a case given a concrete name. Thousands have gone their way without any trace.

It was in these turmoils that there occurred some very unhappy episodes, namely, the murders of a sub-inspector and sub-divisional officer, all in the Muzaffarpur district.

It is impossible to expect a movement of such proportion to be strictly controlled, particularly when the trusted leaders were behind prison walls. There were cases in which innocent lives were lost for one reason or another. And in this, Indian casualties far outnumbered those of the European. The murder of two Canadian airmen on the 13th August, 1942 and of 5 European military men and one Anglo Indian at Marhowrah (Saran) on the 15th August, the tragedy of Minapore, Rupauli and other places and the murder of a jail official by the prisoners at Bhagalpore are some of the instances of such indiscipline. To us, it is not surprising that such tragedies

occurred in a moment of heat. What is infinitely more surprising is the relatively small number of such cases in the face of the fact that a very large number of officials, Europeans and Indians, were absolutely at the mercy of the revolutionaries for days together. This furnishes strong testimony to the spirit of non-violence which was engendered and nourished by the Congress, in the people. This was a great moderating influence; one shudders to think what it would have come to but for that healthy influence!

The youth of no country can countenance such atrocities as these and it was to meet them that a number of spirited lads went underground. That was much after the first flush was over and many heroic youngsters gambled with their lives, and in a cool and calculated manner fought the armed and punitive police openly, mounted the gallows, as a consequence, and the sufferings of the people of Bhagalpur and Saran reached their maximum. Among the undergrounders, were Mr. Sitaram Singh and Parth Brahmachari of Bhagalpur, Shiavanand Brahmachari of Dehri-on-Sone and Kumar Badrinarayan Singh of Aurangbad in Gaya. These fighters have been of late cropping up from under-ground since April 13. There were Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and his band of men also who are once again in the open. Now the march of time has united this band of workers. The only faces missing are those of heroic Mahendra Chowdhury and Mahendra Gope. But they have gone for ever. Before the two Mahendras eight others had been killed. Four persons escaped the public hangman since the Mahatma managed to persuade the Viceroy to see the unreasonableness of hanging persons who fought in August 1942 and in the heat of atrocities on official side as well. The Government collected lakhs and lakhs in collective fines in the immediate weeks of the revolution and the post-August months. The police collected privately as much as went into the state treasury.

The people of Bihar suffered untold hardships, humiliations and tortures when the situation was brought under

control with the aid of British bayonets. Villages were burnt and bombed, inhabitants bayonated without scruples and innocent persons haunted like pariah dogs. Collective fines were realised in lakhs, and a crop of prosecutions started under the emergency laws which reduced justice to a mockery. Thus Bihar was reconquered by the British, but the spirit of revolution has struck deep roots. The people, who once dreaded the shadow of the police, have been steeled in their patriotic resolve. Guns and bayonets no longer terrify them. The year 1942 is cherished as a precious memory and continues to inspire the people of Bihar.

Bihar is a land of revolutions and revolutionaries. This province has set up the unique tradition of the Shahabad revolt in 1857 which set the spark of revolution from Jhansi to Barrackpore almost a hundred years ago. In the words of Mr Jayaprakash Narayan himself Bihar has been the first province to set up the second milestone in India's march towards freedom.

The Bihar Struggle of 1942 will remain incomplete if a short history of the part played by the workers of Tatanagar does not find place in the freedom struggle during that mighty Revolution.

The Tata Workers' Union was holding on the evening of the 9th of August an ordinary meeting of their own when a day's strike for the 10th August as a protest against the arrest of the leaders was declared. The Jamshedpur factories ran three shifts a day and it is but natural that all the workers could not be present at the meeting. The response, however, was spontaneous and extra 20% workers absented themselves in addition to the usual absentees. The annual bonus time was ahead and a general strike after that day was decided upon.

The Tata Iron & Steel Company maintain an Information Service in Jamshedpur at heavy cost. According to them it was all well on the Jamshedpur front. On the 20th August 1942, as the first shift went to work, the Blast Furnaces Staff reported to the Departmental Head that

from the next day onward they would be on strike and they would, therefore, like to help the management to shut down the furnaces, as they did not want any damage to be done to the works. The warning was not taken. In the afternoon, when the second shift replaced the first by three o' clock the Open Hearth Department had already taken the lead in the strike by totally absenting themselves. The news of the beginning of the strike spread and by five o' clock many a Department had suspended their work.

Meanwhile, the Jamshedpur police had arrested five labour leaders on the night of the 15th August. Sjts. M. John, M.K. Ghose, T.P. Sinha, N.C. Mukerjee and Treta Singh ( a youthful Sikh leader of 28, who had twice to go on hunger strike in Patna Camp Jail, and who died soon after the end of the second hunger strike in Patna Government Hospital ). Mr. M.D. Madan, a young Parsi Metallurgist, was the next victim on the night of the 19th August. Mr. Madan owns a very beautiful house in the Circuit House area of Jamshedpur which the Government requisitioned for the Military. Mr. Madan had the temerity to dare the Government to throw him and his own family out of his own house. The Tata Management suspected him of trying to organise a strike and had him arrested for the sake as they thought of security.

The morning of the 20th August 1942 saw a most peaceful and complete strike in Tata Works, where most of the 30,000 workers absented themselves and those who remained could hardly run any single department. The strike was so very peaceful and so spontaneous that it evoked praise from the American and other foreign troops who could not think of such things in their own lands. The Tata Management opened their gates and tried to induce the labour to return to work and also recruit anew, but they failed. Bribes and threats were equally of no avail. The attempts to run an industry requiring skilled labour with the help of unskilled labour proved abortive.

Some of the strikers met the same evening and they



were overjoyed with the spontaneity and the completeness of the strike. They parted with a resolve to make it continue. The seriousness of the the situation was now realised by the Management and the Hon'ble Mr. S.K. Sinha, the Calcutta Chief of the Tatas, was on the scene on the 22nd August. Meanwhile a gathering of some of the Supervising Staff was held at the bungalow of a high Tata official, when congratulations were showered upon the strikers for their peaceful demonstration and their success. The officials said that they also shared the labourers' feeling and once their resentment was successfully and unanimously demonstrated, the work should be resumed.

It was known at this meeting that various persons on strike had helped at smoothly shutting down the plant. The new 27,500 K.W. power plant was completely shut down and locked with the help of those who went on strike. The Transportation Staff had line-cleared miles of railway sidings in the works, before they put down their tools.

The situation took a new turn with the arrival of Sir Ardeshir Dalal, the Managing Director, who persuaded the labourers to resume their work as in his opinion the defence of the country against Japan should be the first concern. The employees related that there was a unanimity about the defence of the country against foreign enemies, but the British were unwilling to part with power and that they wanted India, to help Britain in the war just in the way as she liked it.

Tata employees met next day and after a discussion of over three to four hours, passed by a huge majority a resolution not to resume work till the national leaders and the local detenues were released. The Management, having thus failed to achieve by persuasion to end the strike, adopted other means.

Employees were called department by department by high officials and tried to be persuaded or coerced. Other minor officials were sent out for carrying on the propaganda for the termination of the strike. Communal differences

were exploited, threats uttered and inducements were offered. Sir Ardeshir went on the local radio and declared that works would reopen on the 1st September and those who did not rejoin them would lose their jobs.

Meanwhile the Labour Union had been busy evacuating labour from the town and some seventy per cent of them had left the town by the time, the work was resumed. Other Labour Unions, under the auspices of the Radical Democratic Party had, meanwhile, sprung up but their counter-propaganda was not successful.

A representative Committee of the Departments used to meet almost daily and review the situation. As the strike was spontaneous and lacked that cohesion and unity born of organised action, there was always a demand that either all should stay out or all should go in. Sm. Khurshedben Naoroji came to Jamshedpur in those days to congratulate and cheer up the strikers. Her talk to them on dynamics of nonviolence gave them a little strength. Feeling that their unanimity was cracking, they resolved that the work should not be resumed on the 1st September but they should decide on the 10th September as to what their future action should be.

The call of Sir Ardeshir Dalal asking employees to join on the 1st September had not met with success. Rumours went round that some five hundred Belgian technicians were available in Calcutta and the General Superintendent had gone there to recruit them. The workers seemed to relent at this vicious rumour. So, the representatives of workers met the same evening and resolved by a majority to join work on the 3rd September and sent a deputation to Sir Ardeshir Dalal to inform him of their resolution and to get him to promise that there would be no victimisation because of the strike. Sir Ardeshir Dalal assured non-victimisation.

There was a strong minority, however, who desired the strike to continue. A meeting was therefore held in the afternoon of the 2nd September; but the disruption

once created could not be retrieved, but the few who wanted the strike to continue had sufficient strength to stand by themselves.

So the 3rd September saw most of the supervising staff returning to their jobs and with the labour that they could get hold of, as most had evacuated, they set the wheels in motion again, after full thirteen days of calm and peaceful strike. There was peaceful picketing at the gates and men and women courted jail and sacrificed for what they considered their duty.

While strike situation was in such condition, the situation was developing curiously on other fronts. The police of Jamshedpur were not free from germs of sedition, as the Ruling power would call them. At the instance of Mr. Ramanand Tewary, a habildar in the local police they had resolved not to abide by the wishes of the authority in the political struggle.

Mr. Tewary determined to play his part in the struggle and immediately formed a secret organisation of policemen named Inquilabi Sipahi Dal. It started with three members but as the struggle proceeded the membership rose to 700.

He began by organising a mass fast on the night of August 9. The next day the constables under his leadership took a prominent part in making the strike in Tatanagar a success. That night he held a meeting of all the armed constables, where it was decided not to help in government's policy of repression. By August 15, he was able to distribute 12,000 pamphlets among the constables of Bihar urging them to non-co-operate with government.

The Police Officers did not know what to do. The Police Stations, Imperial Bank, Arms Depot, Treasury, Post Offices, etc., had all been surrounded and occupied by rebels. Mr. Creed, the I. G. of Bihar, himself went to Jamshedpur and had a five-hour talk with Ramanand Tewary. Rewards were promised, promotion to Inspectorship of Police was assured. But all this proved useless.

At last came the British Bayonet. Several companies

of Tommies and Gurkhas were sent to Jamshedpur. The Police Line was surrounded. Ramanand Tewary and 33 other armed policemen were put under arrest and taken to the Hazaribagh Central Jail. During his trial he refused to defend himself but gave a written statement. He was sentenced to one year.

Attempts were made to have another strike by a minority of Tata Workers who had kept out. These were not, however, successful, but their authors were sent to jail. After this small but gallant band had disappeared, incidents occurred which cannot go by any other name but victimisation.

Most of the prisoners who served their terms, were allowed after their release to rejoin the Tata's service on signing an undertaking that they would not take part in activities injurious to the interests of the Company. In spite of this individual cases of victimisation occurred.

Any activity, which was considered harmful to the Company was restricted under the Defence of India Rules. The economic situation degenerated from bad to worse after 1942 and living costs mounted up to unimaginable heights. Tatas granted dearness allowances in parity with the rise in the cost of living. Other Unions were there, but their only work was war work. Sporadic sit down strikes took place and the situation did not ease in spite of some workers being sent to jail and dearness allowance being increased by five rupees.

- The Supervising staff was also discontented. Favouritism and nepotism was rampant after the strike.

Such were the conditions of Steel Industry in Jamshedpur, in those memorable days of August, 1942.



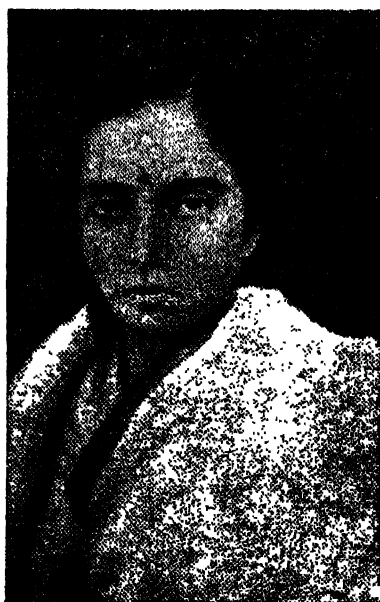
**PART X**  
**BOMBAY**





: CONGRESS RADIO :

USHA MEHTA : Who broad-  
• cast from Congress Radio :







## BOMBAY

There is nothing surprising in the denigence of Shivaji's Poona keeping the Flag of Freedom flying even through days of the darkest repression. Poona's students played a glorious part in this struggle.

The Poona Mail left Bori Bundar at exactly 5-30 p. m. on the 9th of August there was a great rush. Arrest of leaders, lathi charge, and use of tear gas on the Gowalia Tank area and all other historic incidents that occurred in Bombay on the 9th of August, were really unprecedented. There was an atmosphere of unrest in the city of Poona, the Police force made a lathi charge on the public meeting held at Congress house. People protested against Government's hasty action. The first page of the Golden History of the August Revolution was complete, nobody knew what would be the next stage. Men and women, young and old all were haunted with the spirit of freedom. 'Quit India' was the mantra given by Gandhiji. The leaders were taken away far off from the people, the students of Poona took a vow on the historic day of 9th August not to be aloof from this battle of freedom but to render all possible help in achieving their long cherished ideal—freedom of India.

The second day of the August Revolution, that is, 10th of August must be marked in the history of the August revolt with blood though it was a bloodless revolution, Government transformed it into a bloody one. No one will forget that pathetic scene in the Sassoon Hospital where thirty young boys some with bullet wounds, some with bonefractures, others, with hands and legs badly hurt with lathi were treated.

There was successful general strike in schools and colleges—students from various schools and colleges determined to go in procession to S. P. College grounds. There they wanted to hold a meeting. It was a very big procession of nearly 10,000 students proceeding with discipline. They

were shouting national slogans and there was the least disturbance from the public. The gates of the College premises were closed and policemen were stationed at the door. 10,000 students were sitting at the side of the road awaiting further orders. There was neither any unlawful assembly nor a riot. It was a peaceful demonstration of students, but unfortunately the college authorities instead of co-operating with the students co-operated with the police. The police were eager to make a lathi charge. A special police force was brought on the scene. The students insisted on proceeding to the Ground and the police insisted upon turning back the students. Suddenly bullets after bullets were fired at the students simultaneously with a lathi charge. It continued for fifteen minutes. Students were beaten ruthlessly. Wounded students were taken to the Sasoon Hospital. There was neither an ambulance car nor any help from the police for removal of the wounded. The entire area was under Police control. On the day there were nearly forty victims. The next day the city was patrolled by the military.

.Between Monday, 10th August to Tuesday 18th August, the police and the military did their level best to suppress the love for freedom. But the people of Poona stood unshaken and resisted non-violently. Tanks with machine-guns, military lorries with guns were stationed on all the roads. They used to fire from a distance of four furlongs and there were no less than four or five incidents where innocent men and women were shot dead. These men and women were not loitering in the streets but they were standing on the verandah of their buildings. Most of the streets in Poona were bathed with blood. It was blood, not wasted but blood for the freedom of the motherland and those eight days in Poona were the glorious days for her people.

Bombay made a comprehensive planning to continue the fight for freedom through the Radio. This Congress Radio operated from August 20 to the end of December 1942, its chief announcer, being Miss Usha Mehta. An account of how the Radio operated is given below.

The Congress Radio was not a radio only in name as it had its own transmitter, transmitting station, recording station, its own call sign and last but not the least, a distinct wave length. The broadcasting was started on August 14, 1942. "This is the Congress Radio calling on 42.34 metre from somewhere in India."

It was a Herculean task to get the necessary materials for the transmitter. Babubhai Khakhar who procured the money and got the set built by an expert technician, had to take lot of trouble for procuring them. Both he, and Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri got the materials through sheer resourcefulness. Many a time, inventions used to drop in from Babubhai's hat or from his pocket and quite often from his tiffin carrier. It was so thrilling to watch it. It was no joke to evade the vigilant police and their detective van. The transmitter and the detective van used to play a sort of hide-and-seek game. Sometimes, it used to be within their easy reach and to their utter surprise would be miles apart just a few hours after. We give below in short the story as narrated by Miss Usha Mehta.

"Fortunately for us, our uncle from upcountry or our sister or some other relative would come to our rescue. Uncle wanted a flat for one month. One of his nephews would go and hire it, take all the luggage there and would anxiously wait for him. But by the time the uncle was expected, another flat would have to be hired for some other fictitious purpose. Every time the process was to go from the broadcasting station to the Railway station and from there again to the new transmitting station. This had to be done every fortnight or so. Once Babubhai and I found a very good place, quite safe for our purpose. We were extremely happy at the idea that we would be able to carry on, at least, for a month or two. We went to the owner to pay the rent. A queer apparatus was lying there. We said, 'Sethji, what is this supposed to be?'

'A detecting machine to catch the illegal radios,' came the reply. 'A detecting machine!' I exclaimed in my mind,

but took care to see that the face did not betray the expressions. Babubhai cleverly joined him in abusing all those who did such illegal acts and we were off. We thanked our stars for having been cautioned in time. The first words of Babubhai were "Bohin, we are saved from the tiger's jaws." He had warned me not to be in a white khadi sari that day, but I had insisted on it. Since that day, however, I changed my dress slightly so as to be less conspicuous.

Another great obstacle in our way was the mischief played by the A. I. R. (Anti-India Radio) to jam our broadcasts. When everything was ready and you were absolutely sure about a good reception they would start their trick. It was really disgusting! So, our technicians decided to try the same trick to jam the A. I. R. and we were partly successful in that respect.

Also keeping only one transmitting station was risky in itself. So, we thought of having a network of broadcasting stations throughout India so that the work might not suffer even if one of the sets was seized. For some time, we were working on two transmitters which worked alternately. One of these belonged to Vithalbai. It lessened our risk to a certain extent and helped us a good deal because the two transmitters were working from two different localities.

We used to relay news, speeches, instructions, appeals etc. to different classes of people. For this, there was a batch of speakers and writers. It was not deemed safe to take all of them to the broadcasting station and hence we thought of getting the speeches recorded. The recording place was different from the broadcasting station. Thus, the risk was lessened considerably. Vithalbai Jhaveri was in charge of this section and Babubhai was mainly in charge of the broadcasting section.

News item was the daily feature of the programme. We used to receive news from all over India through special messengers. We were the first to give the news of the Chittagong bomb-raid, of the Jamshedpur strike and of the happenings in Ballia. We had to our credit the broadcast of

the full description of the atrocities in Ashti and Chimur. When the newspapers dared not touch upon the subjects under the prevailing conditions in the country, only the Congress Radio could defy the gagging orders and thus enable the people to know what was really happening in India. Our listeners helped us further in broadcasting out news to the people at large.

In the speeches, we mostly used to clarify and explain the Congress stand from the national and international points of view.

The speeches were mainly delivered by Dr Lohia and occasionally by Achyut Patwardhan. Some of the speeches were written by eminent journalists, teachers and Congress workers.

In the beginning, we used to broadcast once a day only, but progress we must and, hence, after some time we began to broadcast twice, once in the morning and once in the evening in English and in Hindusthani languages. After our call-sign the first song to be relayed was Iqbal's 'Hindusthan Hamara', we ended with 'Vande Mataram'.

On November 12, 1942, the day of our arrest, we held a meeting of the workers of our group to decide the stand to be taken in case of our arrest. It was decided that no one was to give out the name of any other colleague and that all the secrets were to be guarded.

A week before our arrest, a number of prominent radio dealers in the city was arrested and through them got the information that Babubhai and Vithalbhai were the main persons behind the Congress Radio. On November 12 at noon, the police raided Babubhai's office. At that time, many other workers, including Chandrakantbhai Jhaveri and myself were present in the office. When we knew that the police had arrived, Chandrakantbhai and others cleared the office of all the files before the nose of about a dozen watchful C. I. D. officers. After that, I asked Babubhai as to what should I tell the doctor about mother's health. He asked me to tell him that mother's condition was serious. So from

the office I went to a place where Dr. Lohia, Vithalbhai and others were busy recording the day's programme, and acquainted them with the situation. In the meantime the news came that one of the technicians had also been arrested. At first we decided not to broadcast any programme that night. But on second thought we changed our mind as we strongly desired that the Congress Radio must not stop functioning even in adverse circumstances. So, we decided to run one station and changed the other transmitter over-night. It was our duty as disciplined soldiers to stick to our Freedom's fight, and to face the obvious danger. Do or Die was our motto.

That night when I was starting for the station as usual, Chandrakantbhai Jhaveri accompanied me, though he was fully aware of the risk. He came with me in spite of my repeated requests not to do so. This act of his touched me very deeply.

When the programme was almost over, we heard knocks at the door. We, however, just carried on the programme. Three bolted doors had to be broken open before the hunters could happily pounce upon their prey. Their expressions said, 'So at last we have got it'. Yes, they thought that three months hard labour had been rewarded.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police, his military technicians and his troop of fifty odd policemen smiled triumphantly. Perhaps this made them lose their senses as they asked us, rather ordered us to stop the playing of the record. Did they mistake us for mercenaries or what? We not only refused to carry out their orders, but also to get up from our seats and thus the 'Vande Mataram' record was over. We wanted to announce the news of the spectacular raid of the betrayal by one of our technicians, who led the police to this station, and of our arrest at the place of duty. But the traitor of a technician came to the rescue of the police by tampering with the fuse. Of course, our colleagues, who were listening to the radio, did get the hint of our arrest when they heard the hard knocks on the radio. Thus the breaking open of the doors served as a call-sign of our arrest. When the fuse was

tampered with, there was all darkness in the room and that made the police all the more nervous as it afforded us a nice opportunity of escaping. The darkness, therefore, made them more vigilant.

After about an hour's good endeavour, the police could manage to get a hurricane lamp and then began their formalities. A list of all the things found on the premises was prepared and the 'punchas' were called in. The Bhaiyajee of that building was summoned as one of the 'punchas'. He said to the police 'Sab ham to garib log hain. Ham kyse samazein batomen.' Here, the police tried to coerce him but he refused to believe that a radio was there. 'What do I know what a radio means?' said he. 'You fool! don't you realise that you can hear some songs from it?' said the policeman angrily. Amidst laughter he said, 'How can a wooden piece sing?' It was only when I told him that there was no objection to his signing and that he could not harm us by doing so that he ultimately signed it very reluctantly.

After the formalities, which lasted for nearly three hours and a half, Chandrakantbhai and myself stepped out of the room and naturally felt elated at the idea that a troop of policemen, one on every step of the floor, and several other down stairs were waiting for our reception. We took it as a "guard of honour". Instead of being perturbed, we went out happy and smiling, perhaps we felt proud, too.

Bapu had told us to "Do or Die".

## SATARA

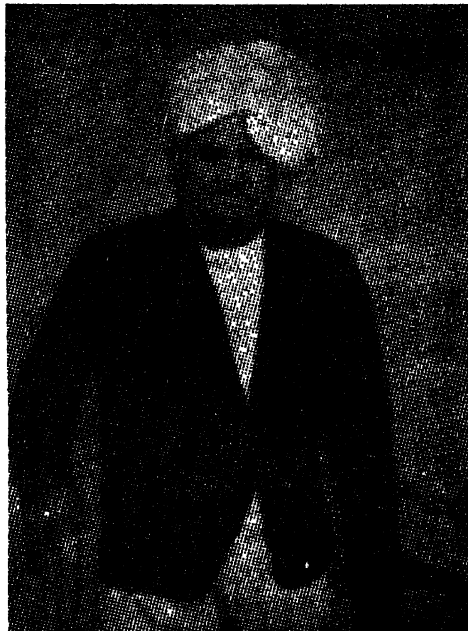
Satara, the capital of Shivaji's great empire, lived up to its reputation, even in the year 1942 when the 'Quit India' resolution was passed on the 8th August. Midnapore in Bengal, Bhagalpore in Bihar, Ballia in United Provinces, Ramnad in Madras, will ever remain green in the memories of the people of India—the places which symbolise the acute yearning and the undaunted spirit for achievement of freedom from foreign shackles.



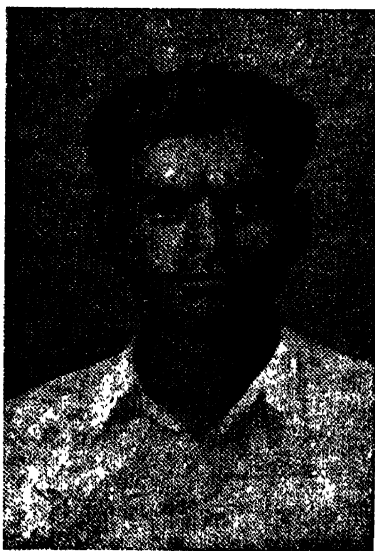
With the arrest of every provincial worker on the morning of the 9th, the people took the lead in their own hands. They held meetings amongst themselves for some time, and ultimately on the 24th August, they began their march. Katcheris became the first targets of attacks. About 1000 people formed a procession and went to the Mamlatdar's Katcheri in Karad. The work was stopped, the National Flag was hoisted, and the government officials were requested to think of themselves as true servants. The second *morcha* was carried at the Mamlatdar's katcheri at Patna. It was a peaceful event. The third *morcha* was at Tasgaon. Nearly 2500 people had gathered. The Mamlatdar and his clerk stopped their work and came out. They were given Gandhi caps and were asked to carry the National Flag with the procession. The fourth and the most eventful of the district *morchas* was at Vaduj. More than 1000 people marched against the Katcheri. The police opened fire on this unarmed and peaceful procession. Parshuram Gadge, who led the procession with the Congress Flag in his hand, got a bullet in his arm but refused to budge an inch. He received three more bullets. But bravely he stood on the spot holding fast the Congress Flag till he fell down. Two youngs lads, Ashok and Arvind, who were standing by his side got bullets in their chests. Three others died on the spot as a result of Police firing. Nearly 40 were wounded. Two of these died in the hospital. The Police kicked the dead bodies of these people who had fallen so valiantly and fought in such a non-violent manner.

After this, a regime of repression was let loose. 400 men were arrested. Villages were combed and villagers were harassed by the Police in every possible way. On the day following 7th September, 1942, the 5th *Morcha* was organised in Islampur. Nearly 1500 men had gathered. The D S.P. was present in person. Fire was opened. Mr Pandya, an Engineer at Kirloskerwadi, who held the Congress Flag in hand, was shot dead on the spot. Mr. Barbatte, his assistant, was also shot dead. Nearly a dozen persons died. Four

## HEROES OF SATRA :



Nana Patil : The Leader of Satra who setup a parallel Government.



Sri Kisan Veer : Who was known as the Dictator and gave a constructive bias to the whole movement.



Lilabai Patil : of Khandesh. She was sentenced to five years. But she escaped from prison and joined the parallel Government with her husband.



more were wounded. A young lad who received a bullet in the thigh had to get his foot amputated. Ten were arrested on the spot and some were beaten. Among these was Sri Pandu Master. He was arrested but managed to escape from the Yervada Central Prison.

The Islampur firing drove the movement underground. The Police repression assumed such a virulent form that it was impossible for Congress workers to carry on the activities openly. To meet the Police oppression, the fighters went underground.

There is a vital difference between the Underground Movement of Satara and elsewhere. In other provinces, the underground workers left their spheres of influences where they commanded respect of the people by their service and isolated themselves from their own people to avoid the police. It is true that, wherever they went, they tried to organize the Resistance Forces and to work, but their case was like a tree uprooted from its natural soil. They left the land in which their word was law in order to avoid the police and tried to remain at such places where they were unknown to the Police. But equally were they unknown to the people also. The results they achieved were naturally disappointing.

In Satara, it was not the Underground workers who avoided the police but it was the police who avoided the rebel Congress workers. Congress workers from Satara refused to leave their district and continued to remain where they were pledged to serve the people. They won the confidence of the people to such an extent that, though they were moving freely in the villages, Government never received information about their activities.

That is why the movement in Satara was one continuous rebellion from 1942 to 1945.

From October 1942 a new phase set in. An attempt was made all over the country to bring the normal activities and administration of the British Raj to a standstill. A programme of dislocation was launched throughout the district. Telegraph wires were cut, postal communication

was interrupted and dislocated. Dak Bungalows were set on fire. Two railway stations were burnt down. Three goods trains were derailed. Records from some of the Talukas and village katcheris were burnt. This programme of dislocation, this war on the communication lines, went on nearly upto June 1943.

In the meanwhile a large number of recruits had joined the resistance movement. A new cadre of workers had been formed. They stopped the dislocation activities which was being carried on without any plan or coordination, more or less by individuals and independently. They began to meet together and plan their activities and work in coordination.

They turned their attention to the activities of the police informers in the village. This question had assumed an importance because there were more than 500 absconders all over the district scattered in different villages and, to track them down, the Government were in need of the information that would help them to arrest these rebels.

They enlisted the support of the criminal anti-social elements in the district and set them after the Congress absconders.

The second question to which their attention naturally turned was that of grain levy. The method of collecting grain adopted by the Government caused widespread discontent among the peasants. In every case the levy was unjust and arbitrary. They tried to create public opinion in favour of organising a mass resistance to the arbitrary demands of the levy collectors.

Police informers were given rough and ready justice. Punishments were harsh, but they had to be deterrent. Imagine the magnitude of problem. 500 people were being haunted by the police. But the people refused to surrender to them. The police were frantically in need of the information that would lead to the arrest of these workers. For every political absconder, they employed a dozen informers.

Of these, the most notorious was one Mr Bapurao Deshmukh. Once accompanying a Police Party, he went

to the house of a Political absconder. The wife of that worker stood at the door. Bapurao Deshmukh enquired about the whereabouts of her husband. She pleaded ignorance. Then taking a stick in his hand and pointing it to her belly, he said, "If your husband does not live with you, how is that your belly has swollen?" A week after this incident, his hands and feet were chopped off. This deterrent punishment had an immediate effect on the morale of the "fifth column" of the British Government that was working in Satara.

The police then introduced a new method of collecting compulsory collective fines from villages. This ranged from 500 to 3000 rupees. The fines were collected with a Nazi thoroughness.

In two cases, the aid of the Military was called in collecting fines from Charan and Bhilashi. At Konegaon, during one such collection, an old woman of sixty, mother of Mr. Baburao Charanker, another rebel Congress worker who had gone underground and two other women were whipped. Beating and whipping had become quite common.

Shri Ganpat Patil of Kurla was shot dead by two well-known police officials for the simple offence of telling them that he did not know the whereabouts of Shri Pandu Master. The incidents mentioned here are not isolated; they are the representative cases of what was happening all over the District in every town and in every village.

Nevertheless this sort of representation failed to cow down the political rebels and the people. Instead of striking terror in the heart of the common people of the village, it just steeled their desire to resist the continuance of the British Government at all costs.

The spirit of the common people of Satara was unbreakable. The repression only created a consciousness of the issues at stake and the task ahead. The innate instinct of self-protection turned their minds to constructive channels and this was the beginning of the Satara Gram Raj. From acts of civil disobedience, dislocation and destruction they

turned to the task of creating a Parallel Authority that would shield the villages from wanton harassment and flagrant injustice of the corrupt and merciless rule of the Satara Police.

After successfully tackling the issue of grain levy, the next question, to which they turned their attention, "was the problem of criminal absconders and dacoits in the District. Since August '42, the Police had devoted their sole attention to the political workers, and consequently, the criminal elements, which had never been curbed during the past 24 years of British Raj inspite of the overwhelming might of the British Empire, were absolutely neglected. They took advantage of this opportunity and started their anti-social activities in new forms.

They began to don Gandhi caps and, while shouting Gandhiji-ki-jai, Nana-Patil-ki-jai, they continued to commit dacoities and robberies and violence on women. The Taluka Walwe almost assumed the complexion of a tribal area, where the law of the jungle prevailed.

The police were not ashamed to enlist the support of such criminal element to trace political absconders. This was a sort of protection for this criminal element and they began to play havoc in villages from Walwe Taluka, as if the Police repression was not sufficient to cope with these detestable elements! The activities of these criminal absconders harassed the villagers beyond endurance. They carried on their activities so openly and on such a large scale that the people were forced to conclude that they must be working with some sort of understanding with the Police.

The task of the Congress worker was complicated and was made more difficult because of the existence of these criminal absconders. The Police *Bandobust* was utterly ineffective. The task of protecting the people and create a new social order in the village fell therefore to the lot of the Congress workers.

The police, tired in their search after the wanted underground workers, sought aid from some of the criminal absconders and gave them permission to shoot at any of the

wanted men. It is reported that high ranking police officials saw Dnyanu Kumbhar, a notorious criminal absconder ; and made offer of some *baksis* if he could trace the whereabouts of the rebel political underground workers.

The rebel congress workers, therefore, turned their attention to criminal absconders and, with the cooperation of the people whom they explained the whole situation, they succeeded where a mighty government failed. The British Government was unable to wipe out these criminal elements from Satara District with all its resources. Six dacoities in Shirala Peta and four in Waiwa Taluka were investigated by the rebel Congress Underground workers ; the property was traced and was returned to the owners.

Skirmishes took place between the parties of the Congress workers and bands of dacoits oftentimes. Maruti Shembekar and two other dacoits had to pay with their lives ; Dnyanu Kumbhar surrendered to the Police, fearing that he would meet the same fate some day. He was handed over to the Kolhapur State Police and was sentenced to transportation for life.

It was in the context of this background the idea of establishing a People's Raj or Gram Raj began to take shape. They wanted now to give a practical form to the idea of Village Swaraj. "Quit India" and "Behave as Freemen"—these slogans had gone deep down into the subconscious mind of the Satara villagers. In order to protect the villages from Police repression on one side and from criminal absconders on the other, the idea of establishing a village republic became a necessity. Village republics cannot exist if their activities are not coordinated with the activities of other village republics.

Congress workers never knew that by establishing village republics in several of the villages in Satara district, they were establishing a parallel authority. If we examine the mechanism of British Rule in India we would find that the Britishers rule the villages through the Cities. Thus cities have become the strongholds of British might.



What the rebel Congress worker attempted to do was a simple thing. By cutting off communications, stopping the railways and burning the Post Offices, they isolated the cities and towns and thus made it impossible for the British Government to rule in Satara District. But that was only the negative side of the picture. It was not only enough to isolate the town; it was equally important to establish some sort of Law and Authority in these villages so that in the absence of any sanction the law of the jungle might not prevail.

Nearly 300 villagers from different Talukas, where Congress workers were in a strong position, came under the new scheme. Though the Central Directorate consisting of political rebel leaders was directing the whole scheme, yet it must be said that full autonomy was given to these village Republics and hardly a case can be found out where the decision of the local panchayets were interfered with. People obeyed the laws of these Republics because their implicit faith had been won by the rebel leaders.

These village republics infused a new life among the villagers. They did not only stop the activities of the dacoits, but also turned their attention to the anti-social habits of the people. There is hardly a phase of life which these village republics did not touch.

Child marriages were abolished. The drink evil was wiped out. The manufacture of illicit liquor was completely stopped. They made the people learn new habits and live a new life. People were taught new habits, like cleanliness, new standards of civilized life and new norms of civilized behaviour. It is in connection with these things that Shri Shankerrao Deo observed in last August: "The experiment was a creative effort of the ingenuous talent of the common men of the village. It was mainly devised, planned and executed by the common villagers themselves. The inspiration was the urge to resist the nucleus of a mighty and organized violence of the police and find a way out for decent and self-respecting clean collective life."

Two dominant personalities behind this parallel government in Satara were Nana Patil, Pandu Master and Kisan Vir.

Nana Patil was the great organizer of this New State, though he never knew that in effect he was organising a state—a parallel authority to the British Government.

Kisan Vir, his lieutenant, who refused to rot in jail and managed to escape from Yerowda along with Pandu Master, has become known as the Dictator and he was mainly responsible for balancing the destructive activities of the whole movement by giving them a constructive basis.

Appa Master, another of Nana Patil's lieutenants, organized the Toofan Sena which was the Authorised Police Force of this New State.

Shri Nathalal was the brain behind the Grama Raj. Like Nana Phadnis, he guided the States activities and tided over many a crisis.

Dr. Uttamrao Patil was responsible for giving all these workers a consciousness of the significance of this new experiment.

Thus ended the valiant struggle waged by the people of Satara. Satara is the heart of the Maratha tradition of heroes. It is the homeland of Shivaji's undefeated armies, sparks of which lit up the dreary gloom of the 17th century Maharashtra. The peasantry of Satara has borne a proud heritage of fearlessness which shall not brook injustice without protest. What the villages of Satara think today will become the accepted norm of rural consciousness all over the Maratha country in days to come.

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# **APPENDIX**

**“उनकी यादमें जिन्होंने अपने खूनसे  
हिंदुस्तानके बागको सींचा”**

*मौलाना आज़ाद*

# APPENDIX A

## A. I. C. C. MEETING AUGUST 7 AND 8

A meeting of the A. I. C. C. was held in Bombay on August 7 and 8, 1942. The following resolution recommended by the Working Committee was passed by an overwhelming majority only 13 members dissenting.

### QUIT INDIA

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have, given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese people its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent

in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling Power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm. The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of nazism, fascism and imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these Nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A. I. C. C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a Provisional Government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The Provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the

country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied powers, to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The Provisional Government will evolve a scheme for Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial Power.

While the A. I. C. C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world, demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations; the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's



resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which

is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A. I. C. C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A. I. C. C. has started its own view of the future governance under free India the A. I. C. C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on

mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

## APPENDIX B

### INDIA WILL REMEMBER WITH PRIDE

MAHATMA GANDHI

"I cannot cancel the Congress rebellion which is of a purely non-violent character. I am proud of it. I have no reparation to make, for I have no consciousness of guilt." (In his letter to Sir Reginald Maxwell).

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"I cannot withdraw August resolution. As you have very properly said it is innocuous. You may differ about the sanctions. It is the breath of life for me." (In his letter to Dr Jayakar),

\*                      \*                      \*

"I have not a shadow of doubt that passage through fire and suffering by thousands of Congressmen and Congress sympathisers has raised the status of India and the strength of the people.....the difference between now and August '42 is that at that time I had no knowledge of the response of the people both pro-Congress and anti-Congress would make. Now I know the kind of response they made. The heroism, suffering and self-sacrifice of those who took part in this struggle are beyond praise....."

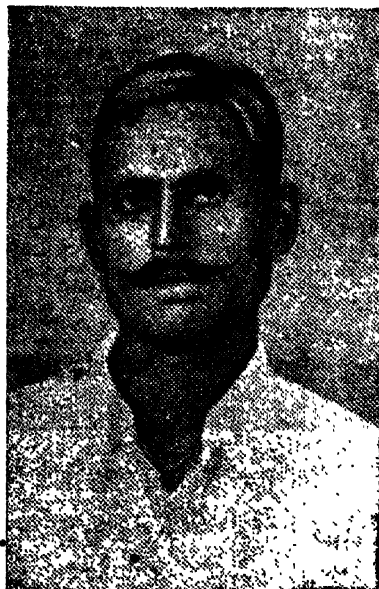
(*From Hindusthan Standard—20-7-44*)

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

"I have always a high place for those who have made sacrifices for the cause of India's freedom and I am prepared to offer shelter to every honest servant of the country in Anand Bhawan." (*Free Press Journal 21-6-44*)

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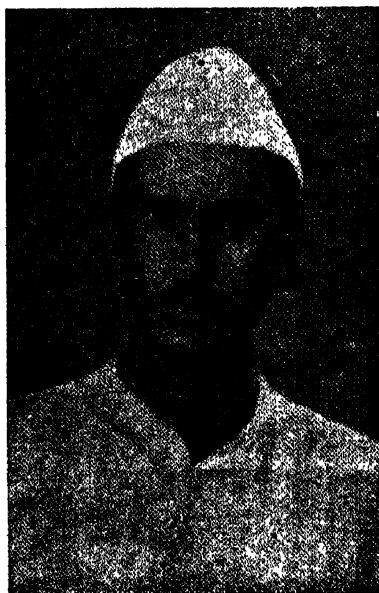
## LEADERS OF SATRA :



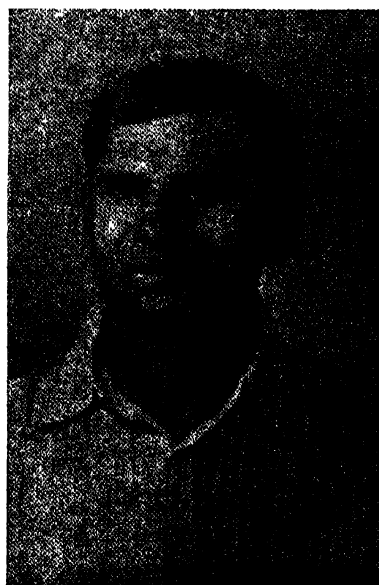
Ananta Kumar Barde : who is one of the best known Congress worker.



Appa Master : The organizer of the Toofan Sena.



Natha Lad : The brain behind the "GARAM RAJ".



Dr. Uttam Patil : One of the most active workers in Satra District.



"It must be remembered that India is living under Military and Police Government ever since the outbreak of rebellion of 1942. The situation should be viewed as similar to the situation in Europe where resistance groups have been held underground until only recently."

*(Interview to Preston Grover of Associated Press of America)*

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"Amazing things happened in my province. In a particular district Ballia,—in my province—THE BRITISH RULE CEASED TO FUNCTION FOR A NUMBER OF DAYS. The whole structure of British Government collapsed from top to bottom, though not for long. The armies came and the planes came. They razed the villages to the ground. They ploughed the land where villages once stood, in order to put an end to the very fact that such brave villages once existed.

"A vast number of cases were started before special tribunals. So far as I know, out of the innumerable cases, in Ballia district, not a single charge of personal violence has been made. I would like to know of any other country where the foreign rule collapsed in an entire district without a single incident of personal violence.

"The masses were roused to a pitch of feeling where action was natural. I regret that some deeds have happened. But I would have been really sorry if in the face of the terrific oppression, people had sat passively within their doors and nothing had happened in 1942.

"I do not defend the actions of the people involved in the the disturbances ; but the normal reaction of an Indian will be to say, 'to hell with anyone who tries to push us out of the way.' Violence or non-violence, it is more important for people to show courage than to be kicked and harried about by any individual or authority.

"If the British Government again launches an attack on us, it will be met and met by every man wherever he is attacked. It may be met by ten or a thousand. Many may take it lying down. A nation which submits to this kind of

treatment is a dead nation, and I do not want my Country to be a Dead Nation.

*(Address to the Press Conference 23-6. F. P. J. 25-6)*

"Let everyone of us take stock of his heroism and cowardice, if any, during the fateful days of 1942. I don't want to speak about those whose actions scared our honour. My mind flourishes in the noble memory of those hundreds who laid down their lives, thousands who toughly resisted attacks and the countless who cheerfully underwent privations, without veering an inch from the call of the A. I. C.C.

"In these three years, hundreds of patriots were shot down. Jail-going was on such a stupendous scale that it was reduced to insignificance. But my heart is filled with pathos when I see young men in their teens being hanged for their passion for national independence. I pay my regard to these brave men and congratulate their clan. I do not know what myself would have done under such tense atmosphere. In such times loose talk about the National Defence injures me.

"I am very proud of what happened in 1942. I would have been very sorry if the people had tamely submitted to the British Government. That would have been a sign of cowardice and would have undone the work of decades." \*

### STAGGERING PHENOMENON

"It was a mighty and staggering phenomenon to see a helpless people spontaneously rise in despair without any leader, organisation, preparation, or arms. They bravely suffered, endured and sacrificed many things. They could no longer tolerate the humiliations and misery heaped upon them by the ruling power.

"It is easy for armchair critics to find faults with that rising. May be there were things which cannot be approved or justified. But they are cowards who criticised those happenings and who tried to mislead the people. I make it plain that I cannot condemn those who took part in the 1942 movement."

**KISANS TORTURED**

The Pandit said that the poor Kisans, their hearts aglow with the desire for freedom, were oppressed and tortured by the police and the military. "Nothing much happened in the Punjab but in my own province, as in Bihar and Bengal and in most parts of the country a series of black methods were adopted. Hundred of villages were not only destroyed and burned, but the very patches of land on which they stood were tilled with ploughs."

**SARDAR VALLEABHAI PATEL**

Not a word of the August resolution would be altered. The previous Viceroy had threatened us with public trial for the August happenings. We were not perturbed but got ready and also intimated to him that his Government too would not escape the impeachment. But he has already gone home. Only Providence could interrogate him."

Commending the spirit of the August Martyrs he said ; "Never before had such widespread uprisings happened in India in the History of the British Raj, as they did during the last three years. We are proud of the spirit in which the people reacted."

Speaking about the actual happenings during the August uprising Sardar Patel said that those who had perpetrated excesses upon the people were Indians—the British organised armies of the native people. It was no use arguing about the propriety of the popular actions during 1942. The Leaders were all of a sudden kidnapped from the midst of the people and people acted on the spur of the moment.

A former Secretary of State for India patted his own back by saying on the eve of Gandhiji's arrest that the caravan was going on while not a dog even barked. But this time the Dogs did not stop at barking but did a pretty bit of biting too. And the next struggle would witness biting of rabid Dogs.

Gandhiji may not be there to guide the next struggle. Non-violence had taken no doubt deep roots, but one had to



face the reality that violence was the order of the day in the whole world. It would be like the Devil quoting the scriptures, if the world outside criticised India if she switched over from nonviolent to violent attempt to regain independence.

The cause of Indian independence would have been lost for ever if the August 8th resolution had not been adopted.

The Congress will not budge an inch from the stand taken in August 1942.

"Some people may remark that Congress Leaders went into jail and invited economic distress and administrative corruption. I have no regret for those difficulties. Had the Congress not taken the August stand, the name of the Congress would have been wiped out of existence. Though the roll has been heavy, the flag of India's honour has been kept high in the world. You may be rest assured that those who have put their signatures under the August resolution will not betray those who had laid down their lives for the National Cause.

#### ACHARYA KRIPALANI

"We cannot forget the sufferings that the people have gone through in the last three years, specially the sufferings that political workers underwent on account of the terrorist policy of Government. We have not forgotten Jallianwalla Bagh even to-day, but that tragedy pales into insignificance before the repression that was indulged in since the fateful day of August 9, 1942. We cannot afford to nurse our wounds.

"In 1942, the Congress asked for immediate and complete transfer of power. Gandhiji was to meet the Viceroy and convince him about the necessity for granting of immediate independence, and in case Gandhiji failed in the attempt, he was authorised to direct a nonviolent struggle, but Gandhiji was not even given an opportunity to meet the Viceroy. Without waiting for the Congress to act, Government started the offensive by arresting the leaders. The people were forced to a defensive struggle. That the struggle was defensive and the Congress leaders were absent from the scene

could not absolve any Congressman of the responsibility to resist this wanton aggression. It is only technically and legally that the Congress was not responsible. But the movement that followed was an inevitable response for the Congress call. No one had the moral right to sit in judgment over the men and women who have sought according to their best lights, to translate into action the Congress call for a general strike to paralyse the Government persisting in its refusal to to part with power."

*(Interview to All-India Students' Congress,)*

### OUR TREASURE

"We cannot but pay our homage to the brave spirits who stood and died unflinchingly, who bore the rigours of a harsh prison regime, who cheerfully faced the lathi, the gas, the bullet and the gallows. The memory of such deeds is our asset and let us treasure it and learn to cherish it if events hereafter force the nation to make fresh sacrifices."

*(Free Press Journal, July 10, 45.)*

### DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

"The success of our movement, such as it is, is a moral success.....We have faith in the August Resolution. We believe in it.....If we started in the right direction in 1942, let us stick to it."

*(A Speech delivered in Bombay)*

### PANDIT GOVIND BALLABH PANT

"After the 1942 Movement' the Congress had grown in strength."

*(Speech to workers)*

### ACHARYA NARENDRA DEO

"Our charter is the August resolution."

*(A. B. Patrika—3. 7. 45)*

**APPENDIX C**  
**SOME MEMORABLE LETTERS**  
**ON**  
**AUGUST REVOLUTION**  
**(ONE)**

**PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY—A COLOSSAL MOCKERY**

*(November 16, 1942)*

DEAR SIR JOHN,

I have decided to resign from my office as Minister. My formal letter of resignation is being sent to you through the Chief Minister. A copy of my letter to him is enclosed. In this letter I propose to place on record the main events which have led me to take this step. When I accepted office nearly a year ago I was fully aware of the difficulties of the task I was undertaking. The province was then surcharged with communal tension almost unprecedented in its history. The war situation was also fast developing into serious proportions and the problem of strengthening the defence of the country was certainly one that required the combined co-operation of Government and the people. I have striven during the period of my office to maintain a healthy communal atmosphere, believing as I do that this province can never advance unless the two great communities comprised within it feel that its administration is being carried on in a fair and just manner. I have also maintained that in the interest of India herself our national war efforts must be strengthened and vitalised. I have not however always seen eye to eye with you in regard to the manner and method of mobilising public opinion in favour of the country's defence.

I shall not recapitulate all the matters I had discussed in my letters to you in March and July last and also in my

letter to the Viceroy on 12th August last. They are to be read along with this letter in order to appreciate how I have tried over and over again to persuade Government to change its present barren policy but failed to produce any tangible results.\*

Broadly speaking, my reasons for resignation are two-fold. First, as I intimated to you at the earliest opportunity on 9th August last, I disapprove of the policy adopted by the British Government and the Government of India with regard to the present political situation in the country. I am aware that you, as a Provincial Governor, have hardly any responsibility for the formulation of this policy. But my second reason mainly concerns you. And that is connected with the manner, in my opinion unwarranted, in which you have interfered with the work of the Ministry and have rendered so-called provincial autonomy into a meaningless farce. Although you could not be held responsible for any all-India decisions, you might have risen to the full height of statesmanship and by pursuing a bold and straightforward policy of trust and co-operation, changed the tone of the administration in Bengal, leading to a wholesome relaxation of the political situation and ensuring the safety of a province which is now one of the north eastern war frontiers in India.

Let me refer briefly to the general political situation in the country. My letter to the Viceroy fully explains my view-point. But I should record here the extraordinary manner in which you acted when you received information of the policy as determined by the Government of India regarding the threatened Congress movement. When the letter from the Government of India came to the Chief Secretary, you showed it to and discussed it with the Chief Minister who rightly suggested that the policy enunciated by the Government of India on so important a subject should be fully discussed by Cabinet. You deliberately rejected this advice and even asked the Chief Minister to keep back the contents of the letter from his colleagues, although some

permanent officials saw it and recorded their plans for giving effect to the directions. You decided that Cabinet would consider the letter only after information had been received from the Government of India that effect had actually been given to the policy formulated by it, following the arrest of the Congress leaders. Consultation at this stage was utterly useless as it gave no opportunity to Cabinet to record its views and communicate them for the effective consideration of the Government of India.

When on 9th August, after the arrest of the Congress leaders at Bombay, you called us together and asked us either to accept the policy or to resign, I pointed out to you that your action was extraordinary and brought provincial autonomy to a state of ridicule. You expected Ministers to stand by you on the basis of collective responsibility but declined to trust them and consult them on such a vital matter except at the very last moment when consultation was indeed fruitless. On that day I intimated to you that I disapproved of the policy of the Government of India as I felt strongly that every effort should be made by the British Government and its representatives in India to secure an honourable and peaceful solution of the Indian problem rather than that it should attempt to overawe the country by a ruthless policy of repression during the period of war. I did not resign at that time as I told you that I was going to write to the Viceroy on the subject. That letter was sent through you on 12th August and I received his reply early in September after my return from Delhi. I believe my letter has been forwarded to the British Government but it is clear that there is no desire whatsoever on the part of Government to bring the present impasse to an end. I had not in the meantime sat idle but had humbly attempted to organise public opinion in favour of an immediate settlement. Large sections of representative opinion in the country did openly approve of the steps that I along with others had taken. I got into touch with all the important political parties except the Congress and when I asked for permission to interview Mahatma

Gandhi and other Congress leaders, my request was rejected by the Viceroy.

I have all along felt that the principal responsibility for settling the present deadlock must rest with Government. The deadlock will not be solved until and unless Government makes up its mind to transfer power to Indians. Immediate establishment of composite National Government at the centre and in the provinces, enjoying real power and pursuing an all-out Defence policy, co-ordinated with the general war policy of the Allied Powers, is essential as much for India's welfare as for that of the Allied Powers themselves. We want to regard ourselves just as free to mould our destinies as Englishmen would like to feel in the land of their birth. Lack of Indian unity is a false plea put forward by British spokesmen. No political advance in the past was made conditional upon complete unity within India. If British Government decides to transfer real power and not play the old game of 'divide and rule', the parties must unite in their own interests. Those who do not unite, in spite of real transfer of power, will automatically fall in the back-ground. The fact is that the British Government wishes to hold India under its sway at any cost. The demand of India is simple and straightforward. A slave cannot fight wholeheartedly for any noble cause. India wants that she should be a free country and she should fight along with other free nations for the liberation of humanity against the onslaught of Axis Powers. You have enjoyed freedom in your own country for too long a period to realise fully what it means to be a subject-race that feels oppressed and down-trodden. The tragedy of it all is that at this critical hour when large territories under British Rule in the East have been snatched out of its control mainly on account of its failure to fill the minds of their native people with a burning zeal for maintaining their integrity—one must have freedom before one can die for it—it should even now persist in following the same mistaken policy with regard to the Indian people.

If it is a crime to aspire to see one's country free and

shake off foreign domination, including British, every self-respecting Indian is a criminal. There are administrators in India who dream constantly of fifth columnists walking on the roads and lanes of Indian towns and villages. These estimable gentlemen themselves belong to this category, if treachery to India's genuine interests is the real criterion of a fifth columnist in India. The great bulk of the Indian people can have possibly no sympathy with Japan or with any other Axis Power. Why should we Indians be at all anxious to invite Japan to this country? We want you to return to your own home safely and as speedily as possible, and does it stand to reason that we would welcome a new master with fresh vigour and unsatisfied lust for widespread possession? We want to be rid of alien rule altogether. We want this country to belong to and to be governed by ourselves. India has for a long time allowed herself to be sacrificed at the altar of Imperial greed. The doctrine of benevolent trusteeship stands exploded and you can no more throw dust into our eyes. Indian representatives therefore demand that the policy of administration of their country in all spheres, political, economic and cultural, must be determined by Indians themselves, unfettered by irritating acts of unsympathetic bureaucrats and bungling Governors. There was however ample room for mutual help and trust between England and India for, after all, it is a common menace that threatens both to-day. We recognise that the war must for the present absorb our whole attention, but only with a free and willing partnership between India on the one hand, and England and other Allied Nations on the other, could we have fittingly organised ourselves for keeping the enemy out of our own country and saving the cause of the Allied Nations themselves. The British Government has failed to realise that India cannot be roused to a passionate fervour and devoted activity, such as witnessed in Russia and China, unless Indians feel that they are free men and their freedom is to be saved, no matter at what sacrifice.

These are natural sentiments fully consistent with the

declared war-aims of the Allied Nations. If you are sincere in your assertion that you are anxious for a new world order and want to see that the cause of human freedom is never again imperilled, why should you hesitate to do a little act of self-abnegation by acknowledging India's freedom and thus save yourselves from being branded as guilty of hypocrisy? Instead of doing what is just and natural, for three months Government has carried on a reign of repression, which will serve as a good model to those deeply attached to totalitarian rules of conduct and whose alleged misdeeds are widely circulated through British agencies. During these months people have lost their fear of bullets. What can possibly be your next sanction to hold India in chains? To-day India seethes with discontent and bitterness. It is the easiest thing in the world to fight with a people that are unarmed and defenceless. Some of the British spokesmen have said that India or a section of the country has declared war. If that is their belief, then let arms be provided to Indians and let the fight take place on a basis of equality. The most dangerous symptom to-day is that people feel so completely frustrated at the turn that events have taken that they would welcome any change to get rid of the present tyranny.

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Even before the Congress started any movement, you declined to give back to thousands of Bengalees their freedom which had been denied to them on suspicion or for participation in political movements, although we were prepared to take full responsibility for their future behaviour and activities consistent with the war situation. Recommendations for individual releases or even for temporary relaxation were turned down by you, utterly oblivious of any assurance given by us. In matters relating to the denial policy you failed to realise the untold suffering into which thousands of people would be thrown and the discontent that was bound to follow; and only after a good deal of efforts could that policy be only slightly modified. We do not yet know what plans have been



kept ready for destruction of plants, machinery and other properties in case of enemy invasion.

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But the most difficult situation has been created with regard to the manner of suppression of the political movement. I have told you repeatedly that while it is the duty of any Government to see that acts of lawlessness are not committed or that disturbances are not created specially during this grave emergency, Government must not in any manner provoke a crisis or encourage or make it possible for officers to commit excesses or to inflict injury on innocent people. Where persons deliberately commit offences, they must face the consequences of the law. But inspite of our best efforts, indiscriminate arrests have been made, innocent persons assaulted and shot down and oppression has been carried on in some parts in a manner hardly creditable to any civilized Government. The fact that some British prisoners of War under German control were put under fetters roused the loud and angry protests of the British Government and its supporters. Can you not express even a fraction of that moral indignation for similar and even worse outrages committed on Indians by the agents of the British Government itself? You have persistently refused to have allegations enquired into and have also helped in the suppression of publication of accurate news.

The political movement took a grave turn in some parts of Midnapore and none can say anything in respect of any legitimate measures taken to deal with persons guilty of serious offences against the law. But in Midnapore repression has been carried on in a manner which resembles the activities of Germans in occupied territories as advertised by British agencies. Hundreds of houses have been burnt down by the police and the armed forces. Reports of outrages on women have reached us. Moslems have been instigated to loot and plunder Hindu houses ; or the protectors of law and order have themselves carried on similar operations. Orders were issued from Calcutta that it was not the policy of

Government that houses should be burnt by persons in charge of law and order. I have ample evidence to show this order was not carried into effect and even after the unprecedented havoc caused by the cyclone on the 16th October and our visit to the affected areas a fortnight later, the burning of houses and looting were continued in some parts of the district. Apart from the manner in which people were fired at and killed, these acts of outrage committed by Government agencies are abominable in character. Let us condemn by all means acts of lawlessness perpetrated by volunteers. To my knowledge they did not take the life of any Government servant. In any case the wrongs perpetrated by breakers of law and order are no justification whatsoever, for the upholders of law and order to terrorise innocent people and to oppress one and all in a ruthless manner.

The reports which I have received about the callousness and indifference of some of the officers even after the cyclone perhaps find no parallel in the annals of civilized administration. The suppression of news of the havoc by Government, and even of appeals for help, for more than a fortnight was criminal. In the presence of the District Magistrate complaints were received that boats were not made available on that fateful evening or even later to save the lives of the people who were perilously resting for a brief while on the roofs of their houses that ultimately collapsed. One gentleman gave a harrowing description of the manner in which he and others begged of officers to allow a boat found by them to ply for a couple of hours in order to rescue some men, women and children lying near the area concerned. This request was summarily rejected and the men who had used the boat were threatened with dire consequences. Later on, all the people whom this party wanted to rescue were washed away, never to be found again. After the cyclone curfew orders are continuing even in areas where people offered every co-operation. Our intervention in this respect proved fruitless. Transport facilities and movements were extremely restricted even when we visited the district a fortnight later. Cows

were requisitioned under the Defence of India Rules. The total destruction of cattle owing to flood and storm would be somewhere between 75 and 85 percent. Of the cows that remained, although they were giving milk and some were with calf, a good many were snatched away from private houses by the police and the military for the purpose of feeding the troops. Such inhuman callousness is indeed unparalleled. One officer's report in writing to Government was that relief, whether organised by Government or any private agency, should be withheld for a month and thereby people taught a permanent lesson. Relief measures adopted by local officers were utterly inadequate. Even bonafide private relief workers from Calcutta, though they produced their credentials, found themselves in Jail under the Defence of India Rules. There is no chance on our part to get these officers removed from that area because prestige will then suffer. There is no chance of any enquiry being held, although other provincial governments have held enquiries, under far less serious circumstances, for then again prestige will suffer. The only chance that people of this province apparently have is to suffer patiently at the hands of the upholders of law and order and wait for the day when nemesis is bound to come.

We have been told that there are indications that political agitation is still in progress in some parts of Midnapore. There may have been sporadic outbursts but from my personal knowledge I can definitely assert that the bulk of the people, including supporters of the Congress, genuinely want peace to be restored immediately. From my talks with many inside and out-side the Midnapore Jail I am satisfied that if officers dealt with the situation with tact and sympathy, subversive activities would completely stop and the whole of Midnapore would rise to a man to work whole-heartedly with Government for giving relief. It is disgusting how valuable time has been wasted for one month because of the apathetic and dilatory attitude of some of the local officers on the one hand, and the strange obstructiveness.

of some of the representatives of the department of law and order in Calcutta, on the other. Meanwhile thousands are suffering for want of food, shelter, medicine, clothings and drinking water. The present methods of persecution and slow action are both cruel and fatal and they will not die out nor the atmosphere improve until some officers are transferred from the district. Ministers feel that both for the correct maintenance of law and order and for the sake of suffering humanity this should be done immediately, but they are powerless to give effect to it. You too declined to accept our advice in this respect. Could you not as Governor issue in time a public message of sympathy,—the Viceroy could do it—for the unprecedented loss following the flood and cyclone, costing the lives of at least thirty thousand people and colossal destruction of cattle and property, a havoc which British troops describe as similar to the worst ravages that may be caused by enemy bombing? Let an impartial enquiry be conducted into the affairs of Midnapore and the correct version on both sides see the light of the day. Will you have the courage to agree to this?

The manner in which collective fines have been imposed by Government throughout the province deserves severe condemnation. The scheme of imposition of collective fines on Hindus alone, irrespective of their guilt, has been an all-India feature and is a British revival of the ancient policy of Jijia for which Aurangzeb made himself famous. In Bengal the Chief Minister had been averse to the imposition of such fines and tried again and again to lay down certain principles which were unimpeachable from the point of view of elementary justice. You have interfered with the Chief Minister's decision and have prevented him from giving effect to these directions. Amounts have been imposed in many cases without any regard to the total damage caused or to the part played by the inhabitants concerned. In at least one case I know the collector was not even consulted; in some others local officers were invited by Government itself to propose the imposition of fines. I have carefully examined

the papers with regard to a number of these cases and the monstrosity of the imposition has staggered me. I challenge you to place the materials on which decisions have been taken before any impartial judge and I have not the least doubt that in most cases the verdict will be that the fines are not at all leviable in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance, or that the discrimination made is completely unjustifiable or that the amounts fixed are entirely disproportionate in character. Fines have been imposed in many cases without the Chief Minister knowing what was being done. Only recently it was suggested by the Chief Minister that the realisation might be delayed by a fortnight and the entire policy considered at a Cabinet meeting. Your answer to this request, which was made on behalf of us all, was in full conformity with the traditions which you had already established. You had no objection to Cabinet meeting being held. But you indicated beforehand with sufficient clearness, but with unbecoming impropriety and discourtesy to ministers, that you would in any case pass orders in exercise of your individual judgment for the immediate collection of the fines.

It is amazing how in every matter concerning the rights and liberties of the people or where racial considerations were likely to arise, you have acted with singular indifference to the genuine interests of the people of this province. A difficult and tense situation, such as the present, might have been eased by a policy of administration actuated by sympathy, understanding and good-will. Irresponsible possession of powers by persons without a high degree of administrative ability, ignorant of Indian mind and conditions and blindly guided by unsympathetic bureaucrats, leads to disastrous consequences during the period of war. If ever a time comes when an impartial stock is taken of what you and others did and omitted to do, the verdict will be that at a critical hour you hopelessly failed to serve a province of great strategic importance, although, if correctly approached, its people were capable of being roused to an intense patriotic fervour and would have readily agreed to face any sacrifice and suffering

for saving their own country from the impending invasion of the enemy. What you and others have done has only helped the enemy who cares not for our future. Whatever happens, it is we, the people of the land who will suffer as much at the hands of our so-called protectors as of the avowed destroyers. Military matters are kept dead secret from us. We still hope Bengal and India will be successfully defended. But if the worst happens, you and others, who now feel over-powered by special responsibilities will, like your friends similarly situated in Burma, desert the province, we remaining here, unarmed, unprepared and emasculated to face your parting bullets and the yet unknown operations of the denial policy on the one hand; and the oppression of the invading enemy, on the other. And yet with good-will and statesmanship on your side to which the great bulk of Indians would have warmly responded, what a bulwark a Free India and the Allied Nations would jointly have been against the combined forces of the Axis Powers.

I am sorry that our official association should end like this at this critical hour in the history of my province, I honestly feel I can be of no use to my countrymen or to you by remaining in office so long as the general all-India policy remains what it is and the province is administered by you on lines which I consider inimical to its best interest.

I shall release this letter as also the previous letters I wrote to you in March and July last as soon as my resignation is accepted. May I publish your reply to my July letter? I also propose to publish simultaneously my letter to the Viceroy sent on 12th August. Will you please ascertain if I may publish his reply to my letter? All these letters deal with matters of far-reaching importance to the public in India and abroad, specially at this critical juncture in the history of our country.

Yours sincerely,

Syama Prasad Mookerjee

His Excellency Sir John Herbert, G. C. I. E.,

*Governor of Bengal.*

## (Two)

## "TO ALL FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM"

Comrades,

Let me first of all offer you and those comrades who have been made prisoners of war my heartiest congratulation on the magnificent battle already given to the enemy. Nothing like it ever happened or was expected to happen in this our long suffering and suppressed country. It truly was the "Open Rebellion" envisaged by our incomparable leader Mahatma Gandhi.

The Rebellion, no doubt, seems to have been suppressed for the moment. But I hope you will agree with me that it has been suppressed only for the moment. This should cause us no surprise. As a matter of fact, had the very first assault been successful and had it completely crushed imperialism, that in reality would have been a matter for surprise. The very fact that the enemy himself has admitted that the Rebellion came pretty near destroying his power, shows how successful was the first phase of our National Revolution.

And how was the first phase suppressed? Was it the Military power of the enemy, his unmitigated reign of goondaism, looting, arson and murder that did the job? No. It is wrong to consider the "Revolt" as having been "suppressed". The history of all Revolutions shows that a Revolution is not an event. It is a phase, a social process. And during the Evolution of a Revolution, tides and ebbs are normal. Our Revolution is at present going through the period of low water, so soon rather than rise to higher heights and go from Victory to Victory, not because the superior physical force of the Imperialist aggressors intervened, but because of two important reasons.

Firstly, *there was no efficient organisation* of the national Revolutionary forces that could function and give effective lead to the mighty forces that were released. The Congress, though a great organisation, was not tuned to the pitch to which the Revolution was to rise. The lack of organisation was so considerable that even important Congressmen were

not aware of the progress of the Revolt, and till late in course of the rising it remained a matter of debate in many Congress quarters whether what the people were doing was really in accordance with the Congress programme. In the same connection should be mentioned the regrettable fact that quite a considerable number of influential Congressmen failed to attune their mental attitude to the spirit of this "last fight for Freedom". The earnestness, the urgency, the determination that marked the attitude of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad or Sardar Patel failed to reflect in the minds and hearts of all Congress leaders.

Secondly, *after the first phase* of the Rising was over *there was no further programme* placed before the people. After they had completely destroyed the British Raj in their areas, the people considered their task fulfilled, and went back to their homes not knowing what more to do. Nor was it their fault. The failure was ours ; we should have supplied them with a programme for the next phase. When this was not done the Revolt came to a standstill and the phase of the ebb began. This situation was created many days before the British soldiers arrived in sufficient numbers to push back yet further the receding works of the revolt. What programme should have been placed before the people in the second phase ? The answer is suggested by the nature of Revolutions. A Revolution is not only a destructive process ; it is at the same time a great constructive force. No Revolution could succeed if it only destroyed. If it should survive, it must create an authority to replace the one it has destroyed. Our Revolution too having accomplished over large territories of the country the negative task of destruction, called for a positive programme. The people who destroyed the objects and means of administration of the foreign power and drove away its agents should have set up in their areas their own units of Revolutionary Government and created their own police and militia. Had this been done, it would have released such an unprecedented volume of energy and opened up such a vast field for constructive work that the



waves of the Revolution would have mounted higher and higher till—if the rising was countrywide—the imperialist power had been broken and the people had seized supreme authority throughout the land.

The lack of efficient organisation and of a complete programme of National Revolution—these were two causes of the downward course of the first phase of the present Revolution.

The question now is what are our present tasks? First to banish all depression from our minds and those of the people, and create an atmosphere of joy instead at the success achieved and of hope for success in the future.

Second, we must keep steadfastly before our minds and of the people the nature of this Revolution. It is our last fight for freedom. Our objective can therefore, be nothing but victory. There can be no half-way houses. The efforts that men like Rajagopalachari are making for the establishment of National government are not only fruitless but positively harmful inasmuch as they distract public attention from the real issues. There is no compromise, between the slogans of "Quit India" and of a "national government". Those who are running after the slogans of Congress-League unity are merely serving the ends of imperialist propaganda. It is not the lack of unity that is obstructing the formation of a national government but the natural unwillingness of imperialism to liquidate itself. Mr. Churchill left no manner of doubt about it, when he declared recently that he had not assumed the office of the King's first minister to preside over the liquidation of the Empire. He would be a foolish student of society indeed who expected empires to wither away of their own accord. Those erstwhile "revolutionaries" who are attempting today to wash away the Indian Empire by the cataclysmic force of humble memorials are making of themselves the most pitiable fools of history.

It is not the unity of all the important elements in Indian life, to quote the imperialist jargon, that is the need of the hour but the unity of all the national revolutionary forces.

And these are already united under the flag of the Congress. Unity between the League and the Congress does not foreshadow the growth of these forces, but their absolute relation, for the League cannot conceivably tread the path of revolution and freedom.

The complete overthrow of imperialism, then, is our objective and we must keep this steadfastly in view. There can be no compromise on this issue. Either we win or we lose. And lose we shall not. Not only because we are determined ceaselessly to work for victory, but also because powerful world forces are drawing the doom of imperialism and fascism ever nearer and nearer. Do not believe that the formal results of this war settled laboriously at the Peace Conference would settle the fate of the post-war world. War is a strange alchemist, and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brewed and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and vanquished alike. No peace conference at the end of the last war decided that four mighty empires of Europe and Asia should fall into dust—the Russian, the German, the Austrian and the Ottoman. Nor was the Russian, the German, the Turkish Revolution decreed by Lloyd George, Clemenceau or Wilson.

Throughout the world where men are fighting, dying and suffering today, the alchemist is at work, just as he is in India, where he has already let loose a mighty social upheaval. Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt, neither Hitler nor Tojo will determine the fate of the world at the end of this war. It is force such as we represent that will fulfil that historic task. Can we doubt that revolutionary forces are stirring everywhere? Can we believe that millions of people are undergoing unutterable suffering without a thought for the future? Can we believe that millions are satisfied with the lies that their rulers daily feed them with. No it cannot be so.

Having therefore definitely fixed our vision on the goal of total victory, we have to march ahead. What concretely must we do? What does a general do when he loses or wins a battle? He consolidates and prepares for the next battle.

Rommel stopped at El Alamein after his great victory to consolidate and prepare. Alexander too prepared and he turned his serious defeat into a resounding victory. Ours was not even a defeat. We really won the first round of the fight inasmuch as over large territories of the country the civil rule of the British aggressor was completely uprooted. The masses have now learnt from experience that the imposing edifice of the police and magistracy and law courts and prisons which goes by the name of British Raj is but a house of cards when they hurl against either collective power. This lesson is not likely to be forgotten and it constitutes the starting point for the next offensive.

Our third and most important task then at the present moment is to prepare for the next major offensive. Perhaps organisation, discipline ourselves—these are our present watch-words.

The next offensive? When do we expect to launch the next offensive? Some people think that the masses will not rise again for the next five or six years. This estimate might be true of peace time but it does not hold good for a stormy war-torn world of fast moving events. The savage tyrannies of the British fascists—the Linlithgows, the Halletts, the Stewarts and the myriads of others and their base Indian Lackeys—may have compelled the people to lie low for the present, but they have nowhere converted them into friends of the oppressors. The whole countryside, where this British type of Nazi Hell was let loose, is seething with the most intense discontent, anger and thirst for revenge. The people have merely to understand that *powerful preparations are afoot* to take courage again and to enter the plans and schemes of the next offensive, with active, co-ordinated and disciplined work; it would be wholly favourable for the next assault. International events may come to our aid. Then there is Gandhiji's ever-impending fast unto death, a constant reminder to us and to the people not to slacken, not to waver, not to rest on the oars.

The question of the next offensive is linked up with the

question of the positive task of the Revolution—i. e., the establishment of the units of the Revolutionary governments. With the latter question is bound up the question of violence and maintenance of armed forces. I wish, therefore, to place before you my view on this question, as to my mind it affects vitally the future of our Revolution.

First of all, I feel I must say a few words about the noise the British authorities have made about the violence committed in the course of this revolution. There was some violence indeed under extreme provocation, but it was remarkably little as compared with the magnitude of the Rising and the staggering manifestation of individual and collective non-violence. It is not realised, perhaps, that thousands of British and Indian employees of the foreign were for some days literally at the mercy of the masses, who took compassion on their foes and spared them their lives and property. And what of the cool, sublime courage of those thousands of young and old men and women who received the enemy's bullets on their chests with the flag of revolution in their hands and "Inquilab Zindabad" on their lips? Have the British a word of praise for this godly courage?

In any case is it not remarkable that the British power which is soaked in violence, which is based on violence, which daily commits the most pitiless forms of violence, which grinds down millions of people and sucks their lifeblood should make so much noise about the violence that others commit? How are the British concerned with what weapons we choose to fight them with? Have they pledged non-violence if the rebels adhere to it? Have they not already shot down thousands of our non-violent soldiers? Whatever weapons we use the British have only bullets for us and looting and rape and arson. So let them keep quiet as to how we fight them; it is our business entirely to decide that.

Coming to the question as it affects us, I would first remind you of the difference between Gandhiji's views on non-violence and those of the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. Gandhiji is in no event prepared to depart from

non-violence. With him it is a question of faith and life principle. Not so with the Congress. Then Congress has stated repeatedly during this war that if India became free, or even if a national Government were set up, it would be prepared to resist aggression with arms. But, if we are prepared to fight Japan and Germany with arms, why ~~must~~ we refuse to fight Britain in the same manner? The only possible answer can be that the Congress in power could have an army, whereas the Congress in wilderness has none. But *supposing a revolutionary army were created or if the present Indian army or a part of it rebel*, would it not be inconsistent for us to ask the army to rebel and then ask the rebels to lay down arms and face British bullets with bared chest?

My own interpretation of the Congress position—not Gandhiji's—is clear and definite. Congress is prepared to fight aggression violently if the country became independent. Well, we have declared ourselves independent, and also named Britain as an aggressive power; we are, therefore, justified within the terms of the Bombay resolution itself to fight Britain with arms. If this does not accord with Gandhiji's principles, that is not my fault. The Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. themselves have chosen to differ from Gandhiji and to reject his conception of non-violence as applied to the war. Nor was Gandhiji allowed by the British power to lead and shape this revolution; so, in following interpretation we should in no manner be false to him. We should only be discharging our duties in the light of our own reason. As far as I am concerned, I feel that I should be completely justified as an honest Congressman, without in any manner intruding my socialism upon the question, in repelling the British aggression with arms.

I should add that I have no hesitation in admitting that non-violence of the brave, if practised on a sufficiently large scale, would make violence unnecessary, but where such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties, to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure.

With the implication of the last phase of the revolution clear in our minds, *we have to prepare, organise, train and discipline our forces*. In everything we do, we have constantly to bear in mind that ours is not to be merely a conspiratorial action. It is total revolt of the masses that is our objective. So, along with our immense technical work, we must do intensive work among the masses—peasants in the villages and the workers in the factories, mines, railways and elsewhere. We must do ceaseless propaganda among them and help them in their difficulties, organise them to fight for their present demands recruit from them selected soldiers for our various activities and train them technically and politically. With training a few may succeed where thousands failed before. In every fiska and taluka and thana, in every considerable factory and workshop and other industrial centres, we must have a band of militants, mentally and materially equipped for the next rising.

Then there is our work *in the Indian Army and the services*. There is agitational and demonstrative work. There is work in the schools and colleges and in the market place. There is the work in Native States and on the frontiers of India. It is not possible for me here to describe our preparations more concretely. Let it suffice to say that there is tremendous work to be done and work for every one. Much is being done at present, but vastly more remains to be done.

Who but youth can accomplish all this? Is it too much to hope that our students who have set such a brilliant record already will follow up their achievements and vindicate the promise they have given? It is for the students themselves to answer.

I should make it clear that preparation does not mean that fighting entirely ceases for the moment. No, "Skirmishes", "frontier activities", "minor clashes", "sniping", "patrolling"—all this must go on. These are in themselves a preparation for the offensive.

With full confidence in the people and devotion to the cause, let us, then march ahead. Let our steps be firm, our

hearts resolute and our vision undimmed. The sun of the Indian freedom has already risen above the horizon. Let not the clouds of our own doubts and disputes, inaction and faithlessness, obscure that sun and drown us in our self-created darkness.

In the end, comrades, I should like to say that it has made me inexpressibly happy and proud to be able once again to place my services at your disposal. In serving you, the last words of our leader, "Do or Die" shall be my guiding star, your co-operation my strength and your command my pleasure.

*Somewhere in India*

*December, 1942,*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAIN

(Three)

#### GUIDANCE TO AUGUST MOVEMENT

'The President'

Indian National Congress,

Dear Maulana Sahib.

We have read carefully the resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the subject of non-violence passed on 11.12.45. We have pondered the implications of the same, in respect of the events of the past three years and analysed its emphasis governing present policy and its significance in relation to any future struggle, in which the Indian people may be involved. Your personal annotation of the same resolution issued in a press statement, has also clarified the perspective in which these policies are outlined.

Since the resolution records the Congress Working Committee's considered views upon the events and developments of the past three years, with some of which we have been vitally concerned along with other colleagues, it becomes necessary to define our position unequivocally and to bear our share of responsibility for our policies and activities during the period of your incarceration.

The resolution states in the first paragraph that after the arrest of the principal Congressmen ".....the unguided masses .....acted almost spontaneously." This is not a completely accurate statement of facts. There were in Bombay over a dozen prominent workers from the various provinces who held responsible positions in the Congress organisation, after your arrest. Amongst us were several colleagues whose allegiance to Gandhiji's creed of truth and non-violence cannot be questioned. We were responsible along with these other colleagues for setting up an organisation to convey what we believed to be necessary directions to thousands of Congress workers and others who were still out of jail, and who were anxious to implement the resolution of 8th August 1942. We all recognised the urgent necessity of providing some guidance to the vast forces that were being unleashed. Instructions, directives, appeals and proclamations and the day to day exhortations, (broadcast by the Congress Radio) were issued from time to time almost immediately after your arrest in the name of the A. I. Congress. If we speak of our doings it is only with the desire to assume personal responsibility for whatever policies were formulated and implemented, in the name of A. I. Congress throughout this entire period. Our authority for assuming such responsibility was never questioned and we received the unstinted support of large sections of our people. The spontaneous response of the people to the Congress call to act as free men is the greatest phenomenon of recent history. Yet once they had set their marching foot upon the path of revolt, they clamoured for effective and undaunted guidance. They asked to be organized to whatever degree the terror regime would allow. And their genius triumphed for a time, over all the machinations and force of the white man's Raj. With respect to dislocation secrecy and intensive forms of social boycott and other attacks upon authority many specific instructions were issued. By and large such advice was widely accepted.

With regard to non-violence, Congress policy has been mainly pragmatic. From time to time it has defined its



scope within limits of practicability. The Working Committee has refused to follow in the past the strict logic of Gandhian non-violence. There are its resolutions on record to prove this opinion. We have been ourselves profoundly influenced by the social values of Gandhiji's philosophy, but our acceptance of these values is essentially pragmatic and eclectic. The recognition that we fight an unjust system rather than merely the personnel who administer it is the essence of our stress upon non-killing. Respect for life and private property are also logical corollaries of the same. These values were stressed in all our directions issued under the Congress seal. Conditions of unprovoked military and police aggression, however, create situations which are by no means easy to cope with. The resister has often only two alternatives. To resist, with all his might in whatever manner seems practicable or to submit. Under the severest tests the Congress name was never tarnished by the counsel of submission. We took our cue from the Working Committee's resolution of July 1942....."that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious.....to build resistance to any aggression on India by the Japanese or any foreign power." We also took note of Gandhiji's well-known observations upon Polish resistance. The offer of armed support to Britain under certain conditions was fresh in our minds. Again, the agreement in principle, after your release to join the Executive Council of the Viceroy when all that remained of the war was the reconquest of Burma and Indonesia, did not suggest that our approach was contrary to Congress policy. Otherwise it would lead us to the fantastic conclusion that certain specific acts are only permitted in alliance with the British but those same acts become heresy when employed against it. It is however, quite possible that under specific circumstances even on pragmatic grounds, there would be room for honest differences. All that we have expressed heretofore relates only to the events during your forced detention.

In so far as the resolution in question faces us with your considered judgment we feel called upon to assume such responsibility as inescapably devolves upon us. This is not intended to minimise the undoubted fact of vast elemental forces spontaneously released. All the same we deliberately provided a few grains of organisational direction to the thousands of tons of mass initiative for the lack of which this unrehearsed upsurge would have collapsed in a matter of weeks rather than months.

The Congress had proclaimed its resolve to launch a mass struggle on the widest possible scale on non-violent lines. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it, was to be 'his own guide, urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place.' But it is obvious that initiative and organisation cannot be provided by each one for himself. A set of Congressmen and women sought to fulfil this obvious gap.

You have however deliberately ignored the fact that some of us have made a determined effort to provide direction and guidance in your absence. Further, you are definite that the forms of resistance improvised were inconsistent with the Congress policy of non-violence. This leaves us two loopholes we can attribute all that happened to the spontaneous urge of a people's revolt of which we were an insignificant anonymous focus and treat your judgment as a post factum advice for the guidance of future conduct. We may in the alternative disown our share and accept your judgment in silence. Honest conviction, however, prevents us from seeking this easier path. We were repeatedly warned that our activities might be disowned and our interpretation of the legitimate course of mass action repudiated. Nevertheless, we persisted in putting our faith upon one pragmatic test, whatever is calculated to sustain and effectively express the maximum potential resistance. We feel an inner compulsion to reassert our conviction and stand by it and accept the consequences of such a step.

We did not impose any dogmatic ritual of conduct upon our people. On the other hand, we studied their spontaneous

improvisations with such powers of discrimination as we possess and strove to inform the widely separated storm-centres of revolt with the experience and lessons gathered from far-flung sectors of resistance. Our directions have led thousands to risk their lives. It would be cowardice if we did not assume our share for such guidance. We were not waging a private war upon the British system.

We submit, the Working Committee have done less than justice to their own good name for undaunted partisanship of freedom's cause by dismissing the momentous events of the past three years as a series of impulsive and heroic, albeit undirected, aberrations. We remain unconvinced of our error although we may recognise the average element of mistakes which persists in all organisational executive efforts.

As for the immediate implications of the Working Committee's resolution it will lead to a totally fallacious postulate that a people's revolt hinges exclusively upon spontaneity. Those who call upon the people to stake their lives upon the moment of total revolt bear the self-chosen obligation to provide an unbreakable core of guidance through organisation for the interchange of information and direction and for greater co-ordination of all the available resources of resistance. This is not less necessary and becomes even decisive when the pattern of resistance is essentially decentralised. The question, therefore, cannot be evaded whatever honest differences there may be regarding the technique of revolt.

For sake of recognition we witness the depressing fact of outstanding organisational talent being diverted in a lopsided endeavour to generate enthusiasm without a corresponding effort to convert it for revitalizing the instruments of resistance. Such a policy reflects an incapacity to comprehend the lessons that the past three years have burnt upon the understanding of the commonest unknown resister. The paradox of praising dead men as heroes while obliquely disapproving the efforts which they fearlessly undertook along with others, also defeats the linking up of enthusiasm of

action. This particular form of rigidity has in the past alienated from the Congress many sturdy fighters. We, therefore, plead for a re-examination of these weighty issues more specifically.

Grave as we consider the consequences of this resolution in respect of past events and present tasks, its implications with regard to the future course of our struggle for freedom are even more disturbing. The Congress, since its partial legalisation, has terminated the policy of non-co-operation while paradoxically, it has also reaffirmed its faith in non-violence. The reversal of the policy of non-co-operation with Imperialist war in one province even before the formal legalisation of the Congress was not disapproved. Again, those who left the Congress and sought to break the morale of the people and joined with the forces of disruption during these years of travail are being received back into the fold without demur.

The prevailing note of Congress policy according to this resolution is the Gandhian constructive programme. The parliamentary programme is supposed to be subservient to these activities. Dare we, however, look at facts as they are, we will have to confess that it is the parliamentary tail that is to-day wagging the Congress. Ere long it may drag us unwittingly upon the path of appeasement of Jinnah and collaboration with Imperialism as a lesser evil.

The Congress is rolling upon a tidal wave of popular enthusiasm. There is no corresponding effort to revitalise the extensive network of extra-parliamentary organisation before an atmosphere of subservience to the ministers sets in. The election manifesto outlines no precise plans for dealing with the complex problems of public administration, neither have you sought from the people a clear mandate to combat and reject unconditionally any scheme for constitution-making which does not endow that body with the core and substance, of full sovereignty. The basic trend of present policy is the possibility to negotiate an agreed method of transfer of full sovereignty to the Indian people after the elections. If this

well-meant effort fails, the Indian people will once more have to gravitate towards another mass struggle. The election campaign has therefore to serve as a prelude to that end. What are our own weapons for such a trial of strength? Up-to now even when it was unsuccessful, Satyagraha has paid dividends in the form of election victories. Instead of anchoring us more firmly to the spirit of non-co-operation it has tended increasingly to succumb to the prevailing constitutionalist mentality.

When Legislature fail to provide the velvet path of negotiations, when constructive work remains hollowed as an oft-repeated good intention, when struggles begin with leading organisers voluntarily terminating their resistance by the symbolic ritual of goal-going, the Congress may once again face a grave crisis for which it is deliberately refusing to prepare.

These questions fill us with grave disquiet. The British Government has sought to distort the balance of forces in the Congress by keeping in prison all such persons whose voice would be raised to challenge this growing need of collaboration. The Congress has uttered no effective protest against this calculated perversion of the voice of Indian nationalism. This resolution on the other hand provides a spacious excuse to Bureaucracy for prolonging all manner of restrictions on the liberties of these Congressmen whose pattern of activities stems from different set of political values.

The Congress has more than once sought the freedom to interpret the general policy of non-violence in a form not acceptable to Gandhiji. On the 27th July, 1940 at the A. I. C. C. proceedings at Poona the Congress President threw a revealing light on these matters. Indian National Congress is a political organisation pledged to win political independence of the country. It is not an institution for organising world peace. Honestly we cannot go as far as Mahatma Gandhi wants us to go.. Most of us felt that we were not able to take up the grave responsibility of declaring that we would completely eschew violence when we have to deal with widespread internal disorder in this country or external aggression.

In view of a succession of deliberate deviations from the straight and narrow path of non-violence, some of which were initiated by Mahatma Gandhi himself, (ref. the Gelder statement dated July 12, 1944) it seems that little difficult for us to appreciate the relevance of this one-sided stress upon the implications of non-violence in the context of a total struggle. We wish to make it plain that there is no influential section of political workers who advocate terrorism. The country in its upsurge of enthusiasm to-day recognises the crying need for reorganising available forces without which any heroic resistance would be a nine days' wonder. It is this organisation that is grievously neglected in the dust of election mock fights. We hope the threats uttered by the Secretary of State and repeated by the Viceroy and some Governors about closing the door of peaceful negotiations have not indirectly evoked the gesture of good behaviour. We only hope our fears are without foundation.

Many of those who participated in the last great struggle are still unable to make themselves heard. We fail to comprehend the propriety of this summary judgment upon the complex events of the past three years without even securing for all view-points the same measure of freedom of expression. We on our part would not question your right to judge us as disciplined soldiers of the Congress. Your solution constitutes such a judgment by implication. We request you to re-examine the issue more specifically and formulate specific charges and provide us with facilities for appearing before a duly constituted tribunal to vindicate our stand. We would normally be most reluctant to force ourselves upon your notice. But this resolution is bound to be interpreted as a reflection upon our alleged lapse from the path of duty to the struggle for freedom. Since we have no sense of wrong-doing what we demand most earnestly is not merely the vindication of our self-respect but also the respect that our point of view deserves in the ranks of the Congress. The caprice of Imperialism withholds from us what civil liberty you enjoy. You will appreciate our request to secure for this explanation

the same publicity that you have given to your own judgment of our politics and actions.

*Somewhere in India*  
January 7, 1946

*Yours Sincerely,*  
ACHYUT PATVARDHAN.  
ARUNA ASAF ALI.

( Four )

### LOHIA'S LETTER TO LASKI

Dear Prof. Laski,

As the newspapers of my country have not yet learnt to cut the question hour in your Parliament, I have to trouble you over something you would know nothing about. The Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Arthur Henderson, has said that I have made unfounded allegations in respect of my detention in the Lahore Fort.

I doubt if the Under-Secretary knows what my accusation is. The amazing thing is the repose with which the British Government has asked my country to dismiss my accusation when, in practice, it has made some very awkward though successful attempts at suppressing its publication. Aside from odd bits, my country does not to this day know of what I have accused the Government.

While still a prisoner in the Lahore Fort but after I was allowed to write to the High Court, I made a *habeas corpus* application in December, 1944, and supplemented it with somewhat fuller details in January, 1945. When the hearing was held, the judge ordered it to be secret. The Government had earlier taken an added precaution and banned, under one Ordinance or another, all reference in the newspapers to this *habeas* case. At the hearing, the Judge declared his intention to go into the merits of my application and I was examined on oath and they were on way to enquiring into my accusation, when he accepted the India Government's plea that I was under orders of transfer to another province and the proceedings were scotched.

In the order dismissing my application, the Judge also felt that the "sole motive" of the India Government in detaining me was not to torture me. I regret I am unable to give you the exact wording of this strange order. I may add that I was arrested in Bombay in May, 1944, and kept there for a month. If it was the Government's intention to secure the King's peace, that could have been very well achieved by continuing to hold me in a Bombay jail or taking me to another as now, in my home province, the United Provinces.

In respect of prisoners, ill-treated in the Lahore Fort, the Punjab Government has often amused the country by passing the responsibility on to the India Government. The British Under-Secretary has now almost passed it back to the Punjab Government. So far as it concerns me, the India Government is the culprit, for I have been its prisoner in law as in the fact that recurrent orders for my ill-treatment emanated from it, and the Punjab Government is an associate in crime.

No Government in your country could so interfere with justice or shirk a criminal charge against it. On my transfer to this jail, I made an application to the Federal Court, but the Chief Justice of India felt that he had no jurisdiction of any sort. After several months delay, I have succeeded in contacting my lawyer Mr. Madanlal Pittie, but I do not know how much longer it would be before he is supplied with copies of my applications to the Lahore High Court. These were seized from me on my transfer from Lahore to Agra.

I do not intend to detail to you my rather long experience in the Lahore Fort. Should your Parliamentary Party or any of its members be genuinely interested, they can easily obtain the two applications to the Lahore High Court and the third to the Federal Court as court documents. I must add, that these applications are a definite understatement of what I had to go through. In the first place, I have avoided mention of vulgarities and in second the short scope of a court application and my inadequate talents would have made me sound dramatic, if I had tried to communicate the dull



but ugly cruelty as I felt it. I had hoped that the hearing in the court would bring it out more fully. I would here indicate that I was ill-treated in one way or other for over four months, that I was kept awake day after day, night after night, the longest single stretch running into ten days and that, when I resisted the police in their efforts to make me stand, they wheeled me round on my manacled hands on the matted floor. It took me sometime to learn as a physical fact, and a lesson I should like never to forget, that no pain is actually unbearable, it has either been unbearable in the past, but then the man is insensible or dead, or it appears to be unbearable as an imagined state of the next moment.

It is true that I was not beaten nor were needles driven under my toe-nails. I do not wish to make comparisons. The West European, more than any other, with his better sensibility to the human body and if he is not dulled with horrors, may realise what I underwent. But, if beating and bastinadoing to death or near about it and forcing the human mouth to the uses of a sewer were alone to be considered atrocities, these and worse have taken place. I will give you one or two instances, as readily come to my mind. One man swallowed poison in a police outpost of the Bombay province, another threw himself down a well in a U. P. jail and of those who died through beating or ill-treatment after their arrest, there is no checking up except that in one Orissa jail out of over 300 in the country, the number of deaths among political prisoners rose to around 29 or 39, I cannot exactly recollect.

My country has gone through a great deal in the past three and a half years. Men have been shot dead by the thousand, some out of moving vehicles as test of marksmanship or to instil terror, women have been strung up on trees and lacerated or raped on the public road and houses razed in the Lidice or Becassi fashion, though not as intensive in a single area, but in the total, vaster by the score. This is not surprising. Once it is understood that the country was reconquered in terror and venegefulness, the fact that nothing

more massive than the August Rebellion is known to modern history explains. Three to four million died in the created famine. Already, there was beating of another kind 15 years ago. My father, who died in a bus two weeks back, was beaten unconscious in the wholly peaceful raid on the Dharsana salt depot. Aside from my regret that we had not enough time together, it is as well that he is freed from successive imprisonments and worse in his own country and from the oppressive sense of a nation's suffering that goes with these.

I have given you the national picture to fit into it my own experience as a very small bit. The British Labour movement as any other Socialist movement, has been erring, because it views foreign rule on the ground of democracy or fascism or other political forms at home. If pre-conceived notions are cast away, it is just possible that the British system of ruling my country may be found to be slightly worse than any other, or it may be slightly better, that would depend on one's understanding of facts. No one would deny that British rule in Hindustan has as a young brute been heinously atrocious, it is again becoming so now that it is declining into an aging ogre. The middle period of secured and comparatively orderly rule is gone beyond recall. I do not know if it is at all possible to prevent or even to mitigate the ugly doings of this ogre. But this I know that the British Labour movement will not even have made an attempt if it theorises foreign rule on any other view than that of bloody youth and crueller decline, with the middle period at any rate in my country dead and gone.

In face of all this, the Under Secretary has had the brass to call me a liar. All Governments as known to everybody tell lies on the reaches of high policy, but when a Government does so at the level of persons and minor things, it must be wholly mucked. Isn't there one man in the parliamentary Labour Party who can bring this out? Should it be said that the doers of these atrocities are in large numbers my own countrymen in British employ? I do not deny that, there is a great deal of rottenness in my country and that is what

makes it so galling, but the Englishman thinks he would not be here unless he made use of it.

Not wanting to release me, the Under-Secretary has also said that the Government is considering the question of my prosecution. I am now under detention for over a year and a half, apart from my imprisonment of two years early in the war, and if the Government has not completed considering this question, it may well go on doing so indefinitely. There is a young woman in a Bombay jail, Miss Usha Mehta, perhaps the only woman political in the jails of that province who is doing a term of four years for running a freedom radio. I am not quarrelling with her sentence, although, had this young woman of rare attainments and rare courage been Spanish or Russian, your countrymen would have glamorised her into a heroine. She was held under detention for a year and for several months more as an undertrial, so that if this judicial lapse had not taken place she might have well completed her term and be out now. I might add that her trial and that of her colleagues was banned from the newspapers.

Of the 8 to 10 thousand political prisoners, a large number of whom are classified as ordinary criminals, almost the entire lot are held in prison, aside from the inherent iniquity of their sentence or detention, owing to one lapse or another even under the existing law. A few days back, ten persons serving life terms were released, because the Allahabad High Court found they had been convicted on the evidence of an "unmitigated liar."

Mr Jayaprakash Narain, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, is now under detention for over two years apart from his earlier conviction and detention of nearly three years, and the India Government on its own declaration, has been considering the question of his prosecution ever since his arrest. It will presumably go on considering the question, meanwhile holding him in prison. I do not know what kind of an answer Mr Leopold Amery would have returned, had he been asked about my detention and presuming that he had

still wanted to hold me in prison. I like to think that he would have taken his stand on the usurper's unhedged power and would have just said that I was detained under the laws of the land, whatever they might be. That would have been better than a Labour Under-Secretary's screening of a bad deed.

The Government is afraid of placing us on trial and it will continue to be so affrighted. Our trial may end up in its own trial. Except for the Indo-Russians, no one can possibly think that we have worked for Axis victory in intention or even in the unintended results of our deeds. In fact, Mr Jayaprakash Narain had wanted that an appeal be sent from the Freedom Press of this country to the British Socialist movement, but I felt that there was not at that time a worthy enough head of the movement nor any actively favourable elements to whom such an appeal could be sent.

Then the charge is levelled against us that we have tried to achieve our aim through violence. It is a vague charge and, as such, has no validity in law nor a place in any coherent political discussion. The drawing of the line between violence and non-violence as a method of political endeavour is an essentially Indian beginning and is wholly distinct from the accepted opposition between constitutional and unconstitutional means and must therefore await recognition, until, if at all, the Indian National Congress is able to create a State with its policies. That such an event will also radically alter the concept of Government and its obligations is obvious. Meanwhile, it does not lie in the mouth of the British Government, or of any other, to throw about this charge, for the right to violence is in the dominant world linked up with some of the finest efforts of man. If I were to follow the British Prime Minister, Mr Clement Attlee or the Archbishop of Canterbury, I would have to call it the sacred right to violence. For the rest, the Indian Penal Code is drastic enough, more drastic than any now prevalent. There is ghastly provision in it against the political kind of killing or the very vaguest association with it or sedition or the mere

owning of arms. I have not been put up for trial on any of these counts, nor the many hundreds, who have been detained almost throughout the war and are still in prison several months after the last fascist was let out in your own country. In lending the smallest countenance to Government's plea that everybody still in prison is a Socialist and advocate of violence, the British Socialist is deliberately enabling the British fascist in this country to work out his lawless ire against the Indian Socialist.

If Mr Stephen Davies, a member of your Parliamentary Party, thought it worthwhile to question the Under Secretary about me he should also have acquired necessary information to bring out through supplementaries how inept and unworthy the answer was. Questions asked in a hurry and in pursuit of an unpleasing duty or to create an illusion are worse than no questions at all. For the present, at any rate, I have little desire for release and there is no urgency of any sort whatever. The British Government is welcome to hold me in prison as long as it lasts in this country. But the fact remains that there was not one man in your Parliamentary Party who could tell the Under-Secretary with facts that he was lying, that he has not so far nor shall put me up for trial, that he did his habitual screening to make my detention more palatable to the stupid.

All writing from a slave country to the ruler's land is largely ineffectual and wearies, but I hope you have not asked yourself why I have not addressed this letter to your Parliamentary Party.

Please accept my warm greetings,—

Jan. 3, 1946.

} Yours sincerely,  
RAMMANOHAR LOHIA  
Prisoner, Agra Central Jail,

( Five )

## TO ALL FIGHTERS OF FREEDOM

[Months back, soon after my escape from the enemy's prison, I had the privilege of placing before you my views on our National Revolution as also certain suggestions concerning it. Six months have passed since then, and as the saying goes, much water has flown under the bridges, I think, therefore, that it will be fruitful to review the past months and to examine the present stage of our struggle ]

(I)

After a close contact with the progress of the Revolution for the past half year, I find no cause to change the views I had formed at the very beginning, nor do I find that the analysis made in my last letter requires any vital modifications, except in one respect, not of a vital nature, yet important.

In December last it appeared to me that it might be possible within a few months for another mass uprising to take place. That rising has not yet materialised, and it has to be admitted, does not appear to be immediately imminent. The question naturally arises how this fact affects our present policy and the course of our struggle. In order to be able to answer this question, it is necessary to probe a little into this failure of the masses to rise again.

First of all it seems to me that it would be a mistake to deduce from this that the spirit of the people has been crushed or that there is no fight left in them. The people never hated British rule as they do to-day and were never more determined to be rid of it. A certain amount of demoralization undoubtedly exists to day, but it is found largely, I do not say wholly, in the cities and among the higher strata of the society, in the countryside, the area where the repression had full sway, are far from having been cowed down, they are on the contrary filled with a burning desire for vengeance. At the first suitable opportunity they will rise and tear up

British rule to pieces. It is rather the people of those villages who escaped British goondalism that sometimes show symptoms of fright and a tendency to save their skin at any cost. But I believe these people too could be persuaded to march abreast of their brethren when the final hour approaches. The students who played a notable part in the first rising are, it is true, back at their schools and colleges. But from what I have been able to gather, they are far from being dispirited, and would be ready again to place themselves at the head of a rising. The growing severity of the food situation, the increasing hardships of living, and the steadily falling real wages have not induced labour to look kindly at the so-called war efforts, and were another 'open rebellion' to break out, labour's contribution to it might not be less, but more than it was in August-September last. The lower ranks of the Police forces, though apparently won back to loyalty to the usurper regime, are far from satisfied with it and would prove much less reliable in the event of another rising than they did in 1942. The discontent among the officers and ranks of the Indian Armed forces has grown rather than lessened with the progress of the war; for the new schemes regarding salaries etc. of the new Commander-in-Chief are likely to allay it.

• It may be asked why, if this picture be true has not a second rising broken out, and why is it not even an imminent possibility. The reason to my mind, is to be found in the intangible psychological factors. These factors are often unpredictable though it is one of the tasks of leadership to assess them properly. One of the essential conditions, though not the only one, is the rise of a belief in the mass mind that the ruling class or power is played out and at the end of its tether. The course of the world war in the months immediately prior to last August had been such that the Indian people had come to believe that the British Empire was crumbling and they had but to deal it a blow for it to totter entirely to the ground. At the present moment and for some time past, this psychological background has been absent,

or rather altered so as to become an inhibiting instead of a stimulating factor. To all appearances the Americans seem destined to save the British Empire and piece together the fallen parts. As a matter of fact, the dissolution of the doomed Empire goes apace as certainly as ever and strange though it may appear, the Americans are not without their share in it, for they cannot fail to acquire the first mortgage over the territories they "liberate". But this process is not visible to the naked eye and so an inhibition is created in the mass mind.

This inhibition can be removed under two conditions either when the international situation improves, i.e., when it goes against the British Empire, or when an organised revolutionary force by dealing sustained and continuous blows at the enemy assures the mass mind that the British in spite of a huge army, are powerless in the face of a Rebellious India and arouses in it the hope that an uprising would possess a powerful leadership and a fair chance of success.

In August last not only did the war situation contribute to the creation of a suitable psychological atmosphere but also the fact that the Congress stood in all its power at the head of the people. The people had faith in their leaders and when the call went forth they responded with confidence and enthusiasm. To day these Leaders are in prison and they must present an appearance of helplessness to the people. Thus the second element in the creation of a mass psychology of the rebellion is also absent to-day.

But while it is not in our power to provide the first element, we can and should remedy the situation in respect of the second. A tendency is growing amongst fighters to take shelter from activity behind the idle complaint that the masses do not move, do not respond. This is defeatism. The masses can not move till there is force in us to move them. They cannot respond they cannot follow us till we are able by our activities, and the strength and efficiency of our organization to win their confidence. The masses did their duty once ; It was we who were found wanting. They shall do their duty



again provided we do ours. In August last the masses had before their eyes the concrete power of the Congress and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. To-day if they are made to feel that they are left alone, that there is no organised force in the country, which remains undefeated and continues the struggle, they would naturally sink down into despair and resign themselves to their Kismet.

The present, therefore, is a stage primarily for the enlisted soldiers of Revolution, the irreconcilable fighters of freedom to act in. They must strengthen their organization and carry ceaseless war unto the enemy. No suffering, no sacrifice should be counted too great! no controversy, no temptation, no false hope should deflect our course. All avenues of struggle are open to us. Whatever be our faiths and creeds, whatever our methods and weapons, our course is clear. We must keep on fighting. Whether we fight a year or ten years should make no difference to us. The Americans fought their war of Independence for seven years, the Chinese have just entered the seventh year of their war of liberation. We have but completed our first year of fighting. During the American and Chinese wars there were moments when all seemed to be lost, but the leaders and men held on, and victory was eventually with the Americans, as it will be with the Chinese. The present is far from being the darkest moment of our struggle, and yet weaklings and cowards have dared raise their voice. These are traitors to their country and we must chuck them out of our way, and march on. Worse times may be in store for us, but let hardship and suffering not deter us but harden us. Then shall we be worthy of the people's confidence! then they shall respond to our call.

## (II)

For some months past, particularly since the correspondence between Gandhiji and Viceroy was published, a controversy has sprung up among fighters on the question of violence and non-violence. My views on this question have

been clearly stated in my first letter to you and I still adhere to them. There is no need to repeat what I have already said, but I should like to say a word or two about this controversy. To me a controversy on this issue at this stage seems meaningless. Every fighter for freedom is free to choose his own method. Those who believe in similar methods should work together as a disciplined group. And the least that those who follow a different path should do is not to come in the way of one another and waste their energies in mutual recrimination. Where Do or Die is the mantram of action, there is no room for recrimination whatever. Those who believe in non-violence may harbour the fear that those who practise violence might compromise the position of Gandhiji. That fear is unfounded. Gandhiji's adherence to non-violence is so complete, his position in respect to it so clear, that not a hundred thousand Churchills and Amerys will be able to compromise him. Also, we must remember, that whatever we do, however we try, we can never prevent British statesmen whether Tory or Labour, from telling lies; for lies are one of the central pillars of the Empire. Remember also that if there is violence in India no one but the British Government itself is responsible for it.

Another controversy that has been started since the publication of the Gandhi-Viceroy correspondence is whether the present struggle was started by Congress and whether it can be called a Congress movement. It has been claimed by some, who have gone so far as to suggest that a rump A.I.C.C. should meet to withdraw the Bombay resolution, that since Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested before they could make a formal declaration of war, this struggle is not a Congress struggle at all. According to the logic of this argument no struggle, if the British were to arrest the leaders in time could ever have the formal authority and sanction of the Congress. In that event the Congress would become a laughing stock. What is it that those who deny the authority of the Congress to the struggle would desire to have happened on the 9th of August after the cowardly

attack on our leaders? What do they think was the desire of Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee in the event of their arrest? Would the detractors of the present struggle have been happy if there had been no reaction to the arrest of the leaders, if the country had calmly bowed its head before the imperialist jack-boot? Or was it expected that only protest meetings should have been held demanding the release of arrested leaders (as was advocated by certain erstwhile Revolutionaries), and when they were not released, further meetings should have been held, till the audience became too disgusted to attend, after which the "protestants" could have gone to sleep with a clear conscience? If this be so, where was the sense of that brave revolution and those brave words that were poured forth from the lips of the greatest in the land at the Bombay A.I.C.C.? If on the other hand this be not so, and if the people were expected to rise in answer to the British offensive, if, indeed, the arrest of the leaders was a signal for a mass struggle, then where is the grace and fairness in decrying the present struggle as un-congress and un-authorised? When you are on the war path, it is foolish to expect the enemy to allow you the leisure to complete all the formalities required by a peace-time constitution. It therefore appears to me to be mean and cowardly to attempt to show that the National struggle that started on the 9th of August, 1942, has not the authority and sanction of the Congress.

It is a different matter when we turn to the question whether the programme of the present struggle was authorised by Gandhiji or the Working Committee. Here we are in the realm of facts and not principles, and political ethics. And about the facts there is no dispute. It is well known that the Working Committee had not prepared a plan of action but merely requested Gandhiji to assume command of the struggle. Gandhiji in his turn had also no plan of action. He had sketched the merest outlines in his address to the A.I.C.C. That outline and his articles in the Harijan were all that the people had before them and they formed the

basis of that detailed programme which was prepared by those Congressmen who were left behind, and who hastily met in Bombay to lay the foundations of that "illegal" Congress organization which has functioned since then. That programme still is the frame-work of the National Struggle. There is no room for murder in it, nor for any form of violence to the person. If murders were committed in India as they were 99 per cent of them were acts of the British fascists and hooligans and not more than 1 per cent were of an infuriated and sorely tried people. Creation of deadlock and paralysing and dislocation of British rule by all non-violent means was and remains the sheet-anchor of that programme and "go to the fullest extent under Ahimsa" the star to steer it by. While it is true that there are some who in the name of non-violence are attempting to disown certain parts of the programme, which they had themselves sanctioned previously and which even such a high authority as Shree Kishorilal Mashruwala did not have the heart to condemn or ask the people to desist from, there is no doubt that the conscious basis of the programme which the Congress organization have followed since August 1942 has been non-violence, as interpreted by the people in authority during this period. They who prepared the programme have never disowned the responsibility ; and when the time comes they will no doubt appear before the tribunal of the Congress and receive its commendation for having discharged their duty at a most critical moment.

Be that as it may, to fasten the August programme on Gandhiji is a piece of perjury of which only the British ruling class can be capable.

### (III)

In the past couple of months there has been in evidence a symptom which bodes greater mischief than these controversies. Since the beginning of the struggle there has been a group of Indians who have deplored the step taken at Bombay and attempted in their wonted manner to "resolve.

the deadlock". I do not think Congressmen were over-concerned about them, nor need they be now. Every time India launches a fight for freedom this group sets out to "resolve the deadlock". The fact that men like Shris Rajgopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai, K. M. Munshi, whose rightful place was in the midst of fighters, have joined the association of saboteurs of the freedom movement, should make no difference.

But, as time passes and fighters are released from prison, some among them...a very few now doubt...show signs of fatigue and demoralization. They too have taken up the slogan, "resolve the deadlock", and different proposals to effect this are set afoot by them.

Firstly, it is highly disloyal of these Congressmen to initiate a policy of retreat when the generals are in the firing line. A real sense of discipline is tested in action. At the stage of discussion, criticism and difference of opinion are the law of the democratic life. But, at the time of action, particularly in war, the strictest discipline is necessary. And discipline requires in the present instance that every Congressman should remain in the firing line and give no thought to retreat or surrender. It is for the generals to consider these issues. Mahatmaji and Maulana Azad are in jail, but in the matter of peace and war the initiative is still with them, as it always is with either side at war. Mahatmaji could easily "resolve the deadlock" whenever he wanted by surrendering. He has not elected to do so. This means that he wanted the fight to continue or to put it at the worst, the deadlock to continue.

Secondly, let us go a little deeper into this question of the so-called deadlock. It would be conceded by everybody that ending of the deadlock is not an end in itself. It must mean an advancement of the national cause ; it must take us a step further towards the goal that is unalterably ours.

Keeping this in mind we may proceed to examine the ways to bring the deadlock to an end. There are three possibilities ; either we force the British Government to concede our demands, or we surrender, or there is a "negotiated peace"

between India and Britain...a compromise. The first would mean a complete victory for India and could clearly be brought about only by the method of struggle. Those who have lost all hope of victory and feel suffocated by the stalemate and yearn for the freedom of parliamentary play-acting have the option of surrendering. But they would thereby most effectively kill the Congress and extinguish the spirit of resistance for at least a generation. That would be a complete victory for Britain.

We are left with the possibility of a compromise the superficial attraction of which draws many well-meaning people into its snare and the path to which, as to a well-known tplace, is already paved with a great many excellent intentions. A compromise implies give and take on either side. Now, the least gains on the side of the Congress can be the release of all those imprisoned in connection with the national struggle and restoration of the status of "legality" to the Congress and its ancilliary bodies. The least that Britain can gain is removal of the terrible strain that British administration has to bear due to the continuance of the struggle. It is my conviction that in this sort of a compromise Britain stands to gain everything and the Congress to lose much.

Let us picture the implications of such a compromise. What would be the Congress position with regard to the war? Nothing has happened since August of last year to cause Congress to change its views of the war or to induce it to join it unless it is in a position to wage the war in the interest of the Indian people and on their behalf. On the other hand, an awful deal has happened in the past year that would make it impossible for any self-respecting Congressman to be associated in any manner, official or otherwise, with the goondas and cut-throats who rule India and who let loose such a hell over the heads of the people.....a hell the fires of which have not yet been extinguished. It is inconceivable to me how Congressmen can ever offer the palm to men who have murdered and pillaged and burnt and raped and tortured tender boys in the stillness of prison cells. For this reason

and for the reason that Congress cannot accept office in the present circumstances without power, I cannot imagine that the Congress would agree to work the 1935 Constitution again. Congress had once agreed to work that Constitution in order to wreck it and had nearly wrecked itself in the attempt. That wretched fraud has, however, been most effectively wrecked by the war and, as the memorable statement of Maulvi Fazlul Huq to the Bengal Legislative Assembly showed, not a shred of provincial autonomy remains to hide the ugly nakedness of bureaucratic rule. (Parenthetically let me remark that it is a pity that after so ably exposing the hollowness of provincial autonomy Maulvi Huq and other nationalist members of the Bengal Assembly, including those who sail under one or the other Congress flag, should persist in playing at futile parliamentarism. To my mind the only manly and patriotic course open to them after that great statement was to walk out permanently of the present Assembly and have recourse to extra-parliamentary methods to overthrow the monstrous Herbert regime). To return to my point. Provincial Autonomy being what it is, it would be the height of political imbecility to expect the Congress to resuscitate that fraud by installing its ministers again in the provinces. The Act of 1935 is dead and there is no going back to it: let this be well understood. Nor can India live at peace again with those who have heaped unspeakable indignities and bestial cruelties upon her: let this too be well understood.

A compromise with such implications would put the Congress in a most embarrassing position. The Congress would be restored to "freedom", but would continue to be opposed to the imperialist war and to all the measures,—economic and political, that the usurper power might adopt to prosecute the war in the interest of British capitalism; it would be unable to take a hand in the administration of the country and to democratise in the least the ordinance, or to use the modern phrase, fascist rule; it would be helpless to alleviate the sufferings of the people, to provide food for the hungry, cloth for the naked, shelter for the homeless. In

short, if the Congress took its principles seriously it would find itself drifting into opposition to the usurper authority at every point. The deadlock would have been resolved in vain.

The Congress would suffer another great loss. As soon as Mahatma Gandhi, President Azad, Pandit Nehru and others are out of prison the world would forget India. The pressure that the deadlock exercises over those who guide the destinies of the world would be suddenly relaxed and the Churchills and Amerys would go peacefully to sleep...rightly thinking that the India question was settled for the time being and would not become pressing again till the mad Gandhi took into his head to march his flock once more to the prison. Pandit Nehru released from the jail might make statements which American correspondents might lap up with avidity, but there would be no strength behind those statements, despite the beauty and grace of their expression. Nehru imprisoned is a greater problem for the Roosevelts and Churchills than Nehru proliferating nobly worded statements and casting his spell over the envoys of great nations.

It might be suggested that the basis of compromise might be more advantageous to the Congress than that pictured above. Let us see what this basis can be. Britain is not prepared to offer anything more than the Cripps plan ...that is, no power during the war and a fraudulent promise of it at its end. The Congress rightly rejected the British offer, and no one in his senses would expect Congress to accept it to-day. The most moderate demands of the Congress, with which I personally am not in the least in agreement and which I doubt if the Working Committee would be prepared to father to-day, were placed in the hands of the "Devil's advocate" in April 1942. They were rejected by the British Government. How do those, who are anxious to break the stalemate, propose to enforce those minimum demands, supposing the Congress would be satisfied with them? Could anything but a struggle succeed? So, it appears we are back to the deadlock again.

The deadlock is thus inescapable. Its resolution, except



on the terms of the Congress, spells disaster to the country. It, however, does not mean that we are static. We remain at war, we continue to resist, to exploit every shift in the national and international position. The very continuance of opposition to the British rule, the very fact that India's best men are in prison is a guarantee that India remains unbeaten, the spirit of resistance remains unbowed, that the Indian question remains a crying world problem, that the subject peoples of Asia and Africa draw inspiration from India's struggle, that the working classes of Britain and the allied nations are constantly made aware of the nature of "democracy" for which they are said to fight, that the possibility of a better post-war world is brought near, that India gains the leadership of the third camp of the common men of the world for whom neither Allied nor Axis-victory holds any prospects of liberation and happiness. I shall therefore be content even if the deadlock continues till the end of the war. None can tell how long the war may last and what turn it may take and what forces it may release. The longer the war lasts the more the internal situation deteriorates, not only in India but in every country of the world. A turn in the war, the release of a new social force may alter the situation so completely in India that the deadlock may become the starting point of a great leap forward, whereas if we have gone back to "normalcy" again the normalcy itself might become for us a deadly fetter. The deadlock is the best guarantee of our success in the future.

It might be urged that by keeping alive the deadlock we are playing into the hands of Britain, for Britain too desires that there should be a political deadlock in India. This is a misreading of British policy. Britain does not desire a political deadlock but a political black-out. She wants to crush the Congress and still its voice, to break the peoples' spirit of resistance and will to freedom. A deadlock in which the power of the Congress grows, the spirit of resistance remains unbroken, the right for freedom continues ; a deadlock as a result of which British prestige and authority. daily

dwindle and those of the rebels grow—such a deadlock would defeat Britain's purpose and turn her weapon into an instrument of her own defeat.

(IV)

Closely connected with the above discussion is the question of a national government and Congress-League agreement. A national government by all means. But the most amusing thing is that while Congress fights for such a government and suffers others merely talk. If a national government is not the same thing as coalition ministries under the Act of 1935 or a glorified Viceroy's Council, it cannot be won by holding conferences. The Congress left that futile path years ago and if communists expect to establish such a Government by petitioning to their imperial masters, they are welcome to their toading. But they will achieve nothing but the ridicule of the people and the contempt of their pay-masters.

The agitation for a Congress-League agreement as a pre-condition of a national government is not new and there was no reason for me to touch upon it here. But the depression that has caught some Congressmen who have been seeking a way back to constitutionalism has led them anew into this barren agitation. Becoming weary of direct action, they are eager to fall back on this easy nostrum, forgetting that the author of the agitation, Mr Rajgopalachari, is still cooling his heels before the gates of Mr Jinnah's mansion, and that Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the League leader still remains undelivered. (Though we have had the rare fortune of reading the reply to an undelivered and unread letter). I have for this reason considered it desirable to touch upon this subject briefly.

One is compelled to pay a tribute to the skill of British propaganda when one observes how intelligent men fall a prey to it. Either that, or one must acknowledge the depth of national degeneracy which we have reached. If British propaganda "takes in" the innocent Americans (though even

among them there are quite a few who see through it), one can understand, but when it bamboozles an Indian, you have to regard it as one of the world's wonders. Recent events in India have torn Britain's every pretence to shreds. Not even a fig leaf hides now the true shape and purpose of British Imperialism. Yet, there are Indians who believe and want their countrymen to believe that nothing but the absence of a Congress-League settlement stands in the way of India achieving her independence.

If the course of British policy in the past few months has established anything it is the grim British determination to hold on at any cost to their Indian Empire. If any point emerged with undimmed clarity from the Cripps Negotiations it was the firm resolve of Britain not to hand over real power to India during the war, no matter what measure of unity was achieved in the country. Cripps stated categorically that even if the Congress and Muslim League jointly demanded a real National Government, responsible to the people, it could not be granted during the war. (And who was or is interested in British promises for the future?) In view of this clear statement of British policy, to agitate for a Congress-League agreement serves no other purpose but to lend strength and respectability to the lies which the Churchills and Amerys tirelessly peddle around the world. The agitation for Congress-League understanding becomes in these circumstances a part of the imperialist offensive against nationalist India.

It might be asked : even if Congress-League settlement does not by itself compel Britain to grant India a National Government would it not at least strengthen the forces of freedom and, as such, is it not desirable in itself and worth working for? The conclusion would be true were so the premise. But the premise is entirely untrue. In our country the only forces of freedom are those that are ready to fight and suffer for freedom. The Muslim League during its entire career has not once taken the path of struggle and suffering, nor is it ready to take the path to-day. India cannot win

her freedom without fighting for it. And when the Muslim League is not prepared to participate in the fight, a settlement with it in no way strengthens the forces of freedom. Pandit Nehru was not using empty word when he stated that it would have been easy any day to settle with the League were it prepared to join the struggle for freedom.

So much for the Congress-League unity. A word about the realpolitik of the League. It is necessary to grasp clearly that the League is in league with Britain. Mr Jinnah is a deliberate traitor to his country a Mir Jaffar of the present day. He believes that he can get what he wants from Britain. But Britain is not accustomed to handing over parcels of her Empire to its tools. There is no doubt that after she has made the full use of Mr Jinnah she will throw him into the dust-bin of discarded tools as surely as she has thrown others into it before, Mir Jaffar included. Let Muslims remember that it is not the sons of Mir Jaffar who rule Bengal to-day but the dirty kin of Clive. Mr Jinnah no doubt considers himself a very clever person, but for all his conceit and Fuehrerian attitudes history will show him to have been made a historic fool.

Mr Jinnah wants his Pakistan. But, if he is serious about it, he must fight for it, he must make sacrifices for it, possibly die for it. But, there is the rub : it is exactly these things which Mr Jinnah and his followers are never prepared to do. Therefore, Mr Jinnah shrieks his demand for Pakistan in the face of Mahatma Gandhi. But poor Gandhi is not in possession of Jinnah's sacred homelands. It is the blood-soaked heels of imperialism that possess and trample upon them, that defile and desecrate them. The Congress can have no objection if Mr Jinnah takes his "homelands" from the British at least a part of India would then be free. But he will not take them, for he is not prepared to pay the price. He therefore wants to get along by blackmailing the Congress. But, in the end it will be Churchill who will have blackmailed Jinnah. If India is ever partitioned under the auspices of the Mother of

Parliaments it would be in the interest of imperialism not to bestow a separate freedom upon the so-called Muslim nation of Hindustan. Ulster does no good to the Irish, but it is a British knife thrust into the very heart of Eire.

League realpolitik is the ugly issue of imperialist machination and national treachery.

(V)

You probably know that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose has formed a Free Provisional Indian National Government at Shonan (Singapore) which has been recognised by the Japanese Government. He has also organized an Indian National Army which is said to be growing rapidly. These events have some significance for us. Parenthetically I may add for your information that one of the first acts of the Subhas Government has been to offer to send us as much rice as may be required to feed the starving people of Bengal, but the British Government prefers to let the native vermin die.

It is easy to denounce Subhas as a Quisling. Those who are themselves quislings of Britain find it easiest to denounce him. But nationalist India knows him as a fervent patriot and as one who has always been in the forefront of his country's fight for freedom. It is inconceivable that he should ever be ready to sell his country. No doubt it is true that all the necessary resources of money and equipment that he has, have been supplied to him by the Axis Powers. But in the first place the men he has in his Government and the National Army are Indians who hate British rule and burn with a desire to free their Motherland. In the second place, it is well to remember that the resources of all the fugitive Governments of Europe which bask in the patronage of the United Nations come from those Nations. Thirdly, no one can tell what concessions the requirements of global strategy may force a great power to make to a weak and prostrate nation. The conferment of "independence" upon Burma by the Japanese has received some advertisement and a report says that the Soviet Government has been so much impressed as to congratu-

tulate the Tojo Government upon their act of generosity. Be that as it may, there seems to be no doubt that the Burmese to-day enjoy much more freedom under the overlordship of a fascist state than they did under British "Democracy". Turning to Shri Subhas Bose, it is clear that he has permitted himself to accept aid from the enemies of his country's enemies in accordance with an age-old political maxim...older than Machiavelli and older than Kautilya. In thus accepting help from a third party he may be deceived in the end, but there can be no question as to the honesty of his purpose and the scale of his resourcefulness. His success or failure in assisting his country to achieve her freedom will depend on the course of events over which neither he nor any other political leader of any country has much control.

Recognising the importance of the Shonan Indian Government and the National Army, I must emphasise that our freedom largely depends upon our own strength and resources. Hopeless inaction which feeds upon the hope of outside help is suicidal politics. No outside help by itself can free us. It is fantastic to believe that Subhas' army, no matter how large, can defeat the Allied Armies in India. If any army can defeat them it may possibly be the Japanese. But, if the Japanese defeat the British in India, they would not quietly hand over India to us...whatever the understanding between Tojo and Subhas. We must be ready in the event of an Axis-Allied clash in India to seize power ourselves. Only if we are ready to make this attempt can outside help, such as Subhas' National Army be of value to us and Tojo be prevented from annexing India. It is difficult to say how far Subhas himself is conscious of this aspect of India's national strategy.

This brings me to the question, what should we do when the war enters our doors. British policy has made the average Indian so anti-British that he is prepared if not to welcome the Japanese, at least to remain indifferent to the Anglo-Japanese conflict. This indifference will be our death. We must endeavour to remove it and in its place develop a positive

policy of action. In the areas where war is waged or which the Japanese occupy or where they infiltrate, the foreigner's civil rule will weaken or come to an end. In these areas we must establish a Swaraj Government. In the name of this Government we must appeal to retreating units of the India Army to stay behind and become the people's army. From this day we must prepare to establish such a Government in the Eastern Province which in the course of time might embrace the entire nation. This preparatory work raises many questions which cannot be discussed here. It is sufficient to point out the broad policy and invite the attention of fighters to it as well as of the people generally.

(VI)

A word or two about the war before I conclude. The futile controversy about the character of War still goes on merrily in the backwaters of Indian life. The fifth columnists still insist...naturally enough...that it is a people's war. And those to whom controversy is the beginning and end of politics get terribly excited about it and argue with words and sometimes with blows. But the Indian people have no doubts about the nature of Britain's War and about those of their countrymen who support it. They do not require any longer to be told what fascism is or that this is their own War. British fascism has revealed itself to them in all its horrid brutality in the last year. Those who rot in prison, those who lost their dear ones in the countrywide murder by which the British re-established their "law and order", those whose homes were burnt and looted, whose women dishonoured, those who starve and die like rats on the streets...all these people know too well what sort of a people's war this is. A British general laid the decapitated heads of the Shahzadas of the House of Babar on a tray and sent them to the last Moghul Emperor, the father of the hapless princes as a gift from Queen Victoria. A century and a half later Tottenham boasted to American correspondents that he had bought enough sandalwood to burn the remains of Gandhi. India knows of these deeds and of

other black deeds that fill the period from the beginning to the end (for the end is near) of British rule and she does not need to be told by traitors, masquerading as Marxists, what fascism is.

° The war has entered its fifth year. The destruction of life and happiness that it has caused can never be repaired. The interests of the common man of both sides demand that the war end immediately. But it cannot be ended by Churchills and Roosevelts, Hitlers and Tojos. Even if they cried halt to the present butchery, it would only be to prepare new and more terrible weapons for more terrible butchery in the future. Allied plans for the post-war world, of which the barest glimpse has been vouchsafed to the common man, picture the same old world of privileged class and national tyranny, capitalist rivalry and chaos which brought two devastating wars in a generation and will surely bring a third.

The war can be truly ended only by the common people of the world. But their voice is stifled. Russia which could have become the champion of the common man has herself suppressed him at home and disowned him abroad by truckling to the imperialists and super capitalists of Anglo-America. Labour throughout the world has become the camp-follower of the capitalist class and has thus sold its conscience and forfeited its leadership of society and of the new world.

In these circumstances India alone actively represents the aspirations and promptings of the disinherited and dispossessed of the Earth. India's fight for freedom is at once anti-imperialist (and therefore also anti-fascist, for imperialism is the parent of fascism) and a drive to end the war through the intervention of the common man. Neither Allied nor Axis victory is our aim, nor do we pin our hope on either. We work for the defeat both of imperialism and fascism by the common people of the world and by our struggle we show the way to the ending of wars and the liberation of the black, white and yellow.



## (VII)

I have taken too much of your time and must conclude now. I have tried to show above that the only course open to us to follow with profit is to continue to fight. How should we fight ?

I have already pointed out that the present is a stage at which primarily determined fighters have to play their role.

The first thing these fighters must do is to maintain and strengthen and widen their organisation. Without organisation no army not even a non-violent one can fight. Mass actions are generally spontaneous and the resultant of social forces, but there must be an organisation of a revolutionary elite to give shape and decision to them. The spontaneity of mass actions is also often the cumulative product of organised work among the masses by such an elite. In the recent history of our struggle there has been a marked indifference shown by leaders of the struggle to problems of organisation. The leaders, upon their arrest, have always left too much to the spontaneity of the people. No doubt, the relation of secrecy to non-violent action has been at the bottom of this indifference to organization. Non-violence does not permit secret functioning. Yet, during a struggle organization must be secret. I do not pretend to have found a solution of this dilemma. All that I can say is that till the authentic technicians of non-violence discover a solution, it is essential in the interest of work for even those who strictly believe in non-violence to deliberately compromise with their principle to the extent of admitting secret organization. Even Mahatma Gandhi makes such compromises. By merely condemning secrecy and extolling open work we do not solve the difficulty, nor advance our cause.

Organization then is the first item in the programme of our struggle. It is the basic guarantee of a struggle. In regard to this item, I must emphasize the prime necessity of keeping alive, and in trim, the illegal Congress organisations. These organizations are the sole unifying principle of our

struggle. It is true they have no constitutional basis, but it is only through them that the Congress can function to-day and reach the people and fight the enemy. In several provinces those organizations are not functioning properly. The cause of such organizational weakness is rarely the lack of workers. More often it is inadequate funds and the absence of capable organizers. Neither of these is irremediable. The Central Directorate of the I. N. C. has been trying to provide the provinces with at least their minimum requirements, and its attempts have not altogether been a failure. This is not the occasion nor the time to examine the role that India's wealthy have played in the present revolution. Here it is enough to comment upon the entire absence of perspective or vision in them. If they could see but a little way ahead they should easily realise that if the national movement were crushed, British capitalism, harassed as it would be by the problems of the post-war world, would give them no quarter whatever. Sheer self-interest, therefore, dictated that they should invest whole-heartedly in the National Revolution. But they have proved to be not only extremely selfish but also exceedingly small men.

However, the requirements for funds must be met somehow and all those who can help should. In some provinces, such as the United Province some of the ex-Ministers (Congress) are out of jail. If they, and other prominent Congressmen who have recently been released in various provinces do not do anything else, they should at least see that the financial requirements of their provinces are fulfilled. As far as the Central organization is concerned, financing of the provinces must remain its most important job. To send out programmes and instructions without the wherewithal to carry them into practice can be no more than perfunctory and unreal fulfilment of duty.

The absence of capable organizers and leaders, who can create work and take work out of others, is more difficult to remedy. However, a partial remedy is that those few who are left should tour around, meet the other workers and

discuss with them their practical problems and give them such advice and training as may be possible. Where by fortuitous circumstance there happen to be more capable men than necessary, some of them may be sent away to places where there are none or too few. New workers should be recruited, particularly from among students, and those who are being released from prison should be drawn back into the ranks.

With funds, recruitment and training, and wise use of available talent and experience, it should be possible to tackle our organizational problems.

To hold our organization together in the face of repression is a part of the fight...but only a part. Every unit of our organization must be in touch with the people. The link between the fighters and the people should not be allowed to snap. The link in one word is propaganda...spoken and written propaganda : leaflets, pamphlets, posters, radio broadcasts, mobile columns of fighters touring in the countryside, meeting and talking to the people. Distribution of literature is as important as its writing and production and equal care should be devoted to each task. Spheres of propaganda should also be carefully studied. Apart from sections of the public...students, labour, shop-keepers, peasants...we should see that our voice reaches the services, particularly the lower ranks of the Police and the Army. Foreign propaganda should also form a part of our job.

Propaganda is not only propaganda but also a form of our fight ; for, to work a radio centre, to issue an "illegal" leaflet, to hold a meeting where no meetings are allowed, to say things which are "illegal"...all this is defiance of the usurper power and a part of the fight against it.

What more can we do ? I believe, and I do not mind saying so publicly, that unless there is a shift in the international situation...a Russo-German pact, a Sino-Japanese peace, a major reverse of British arms, war on Indian soil...we cannot do anything big. I want fighters to be under no delusion. Only those who fight on without hope of immediate

results will win victory. Others will fall out of the ranks, will prattle wise words and pose as statesmen, but history will know them as deserters, as men of poor faith and poorer courage, who forsook duty in the face of suffering. Many friends are depressed by the thought that resistance on the scale that we can offer to-day...either in the form of satyagraha and strike or as acts of dislocation...is ineffective. True. It is so in the sense that its volume is not large enough to bring British rule to a standstill. But, it is effective in another, no less necessary, sense...it is effective propaganda, it keeps up the morale of the people, it keeps alive the hope of bigger action, it gives training to fighters, it keeps up the visible forms of the struggle and impresses upon the enemy that all his repression has been in vain. It is effective in the sense that it is a preparation for ultimate effective resistance. Therefore, we must continue to offer resistance to the British power in every shape or form possible, in accordance with whatever creed or programme we believe in.

I would call this our minimum programme for the present : organization, propaganda, overt resistance. In addition to this we have the whole wide field of preparation : our work among students and labour must continue, our contacts with the army and the services must be maintained and developed, our preparations for dislocation must go on. A rising of the nature of that of the 9th of August, but on a bigger scale and better organized and directed, should be our goal. Our every effort should take us a step nearer that goal.

A word about the food situation. I need not say anything about its seriousness. That is wellknown and well understood. What is not well understood is that the only real solution of the food problem is a Swaraj government. The British partly by their incompetence and partly by design, have created this problem, and so long as they are here there is no alternative to starvation. Therefore, the fight for freedom is the real fight for food. But, to say this is not enough. We must also have a fight for food as a part of the fight for freedom. At the present moment the only public

reaction to the food situation is charity. Charity has its own place in a class society, and much as I hate it as a socialist, I readily acknowledge the humanitarian motive of those who have hastened to rescue the starving from death. It is a commendable public effort. But charity is not enough. It will not solve the problem. Fighters have therefore the job... their most important job in the circumstances...to create feelings of resentment and anger in the needy and starving and to turn those feelings against the foreign power which is at bottom responsible for all this misery. Let the hungry create a situation in which normal British administration becomes impossible. Let us tell them...not only tell but help them to do it to seize food where they can get it. In the rural areas we should prevent grains from being sent out and distribute stocks through village panchayats or similar agencies (taking care to keep away from Government or pro-Government bodies). Fighters, organised as guerillas should seize grain from Government depots and similar places and distribute them among the needy. Forcible seizure by government of crops and grains should be resisted. In the cities and towns too the passivity and despair of the hungry and needy should be turned into resentment and anger and given concrete, active shape of demonstration and direct action. Fighters, often ask me for a programme. Here is a vital programme which tackled with imagination and courage can convert the country into a seething cauldron in which the Empire can soon be boiled to death.

Speaking of organization, I have referred only to the Congress. Those, however, who wish to go beyond the creedal limitations of the Congress naturally require a separate organization to carry on their special activities. I have suggested a guerilla form of organization for this purpose, and some progress has already been made in developing a guerilla movement. In the very nature of things I cannot be expected to say more about this matter here except perhaps this that my views in this regard have no difficulty in reaching the proper quarters and those interested in this work cannot have

much difficulty in putting themselves in touch with the organization that has been set up.

With these words, comrades, I close. I have analysed the present position without passion and laid my views before you without rhetoric or embellishment. It is for you to decide what is worthy of acceptance in them. You will ever find me at your command. "Do or die" remains my guiding star as it is yours. Let us therefore do or die.

Somewhere in India  
1st September 1943.

JAYIPRAKASH NARAYAN

# APPENDIX D

## FACTS THAT SPEAK

### TAMLUK SUBDIVISION

(1) Death from firing—40. (2) Wounded in firing—199. (3) Injured—142. (4) Rape on women—73. (5) Attempt to rape—31. (6) Molestation on women folk—150. (7) House burnt—117. (8) Estimated loss by burning of houses—Rs. 1,39,500. (9) Arrest—1,868 (10) Illegal detention—5,076. (11) Assaulted by lathis—4,226. (12) Detention under D. I. Rules (129)—12. (13) Special police officer (appointment)—401. (14) House looted—1,044. (15) loss by looting—Rs. 2,12,795. (16) Houses searched—13,730. (17) Occupation of houses—27. (18) Attachment of properties—59 family. (19) Loss due to attachement—Rs. 25,365. (20) Collective fine imposed in 5 Unions for—Rs. 1,90,000. (21) Organisations declared illegal—17. (22) Bombing—one time at Sutahata. Approximate total loss of property about 10,00,000.

### KILLED BY BULLETS

#### (a) DANIPUR—MAHISHADAL P.S.

(Dead—3 ; Date of occurrence 8-9-42)

Serial No.	Name	Age	Village
1.	Shashibhusan Mana	... 18	Bar-Amritberia
2.	Surendra Nath Kar	... 28	Do
3.	Dhirendra Nath Digar	... 32	Tikarampur

#### (b) ISHWARPUR—NANDIGRAM P.S.

(Dead—4. Wounded—1, Date :—27-9-42)

4.	Tarendra Nath Mondal	... 32	Gourchack
5.	Banu Rana	... 54	Bamunara
6.	Bhuta Nath Sahoo	... 35	Do
7.	Govinda Chandra Das	.. 40	Kulup

#### (c) BRINDABANPUR—NANDIGRAM P.S.

(Dead—2. Wounded—3)

8.	Gourhari Kamila	... 16	Bazabarla
9.	Gunadhar Sahoo	... 35	Dhanyasri

**(d) MAHISHADAL POLICE STATION.**

(Dead 13. Wounded 43. Date—29. 9. 42)

10.	Bholanath Maity	...	36	Baksichack
11.	Srihari Charan Das	...	32	Do
12.	Ashutosh Kuila	...	18	Madhabpur
13.	Sudhir Chandra Hazra	...	27	Karak
14.	Prasonna Kumar Bhunia	...	44	Rajrampur
15.	Panchanan Das	...	39	Harikhali
16.	Dwarika Nath Sahoo	...	57	Tajpur
17.	Gunadhar Handel	...	40	Khakda
18.	Surendra Nath Maity	...	27	Nai-Gopalpur
19.	Surendra Nath Maity	...	16	Sundra
20.	Jogendra Nath Das	...	35	do
21.	Rakhal chandra Samanta	...	28	Ghagra
22.	Khudiram Bera	...	30	Chingrimari

**(e) TAMLUK TOWN—SANKARARA BRIDGE****POLICE STATION & CIVIL COURT**

(Dead—10. Wounded—22, Date :—29-9-42)

23.	Upendra Nath Jana	...	28	Khanchi
24.	Purna Chandra Maity	...	24	Ghatowal
25.	Rameswar Bera	...	45	Kiakhali
26.	Bishnupada Chakravarty	...	25	Nikasi
27.	Sm. Matangini Hazra	...	73	Alinan
28.	Nagendra Nath Samanta	...	33	do
29.	Lakshmi Narayan Das	...	12	Mathuri
30.	Jiban Krishna Bera	...	18	do
31.	Purimadhab Pramanik	...	13	Dariberia
*32.	Bhusan Chandra Jana	...	32	Paikpari

**(f) NANDIGRAM—POLICE STATION**

(Dead 4. Wounded 16. Date :—30-9-42)

33.	Behari Lal Karan	...	22	Amratala
34.	Sk. Allauddin	...	40	Mahammadpur
35.	Behari Lal Hazra	...	24	Haripur
*36.	Paresh Chandra Giri	...	30	Bahadurpur

\*Died in hospital (Tamluk)

Total number of killed—40 : Total number of wounded—99.



## (g) BASUDEVPUR—SUTAHATA P. S.

(Dead 1, Wounded 6. Date :—1-10-42)

37. Brajagopal Das ... 17 Pana

## (h) PURBA LAKSHYA—TAMLUK P.S.

(Dead 2, Wounded 4. Date :—6-10-42)

38. Bipin Behari Mondal ... 32 Kismat Putputia

39. Chandra Mohan Dinda ... 19 do

## (i) GHOLPUKUR—NANDIGRAM P.S.

(Dead 1, Wounded 3, Date :—8-10-42)

40. Muchiram Das ... 40 Birulia

## (j) SRIKRISHNAPUR—MAHISHADAL P.S.

(Wounded 1. Date : 19-2-43)

## CONTAI SUB-DIVISION

(1) Deaths from firing—39. (2) Wounded in firing—175. (3) Rape on women, attempt to rape and Molestation—228. (4) House burnt—965. (5) Estimated damage by burning of houses—Rs. 5,41,434. (6) Arrested (including those wrongfully confined and let off after harassment)—12, 681. (7) Convicted—672. (8) Houses looted—2,059. (9) Damage by looting—Rs. 3,55,246. (10) Assaulted by lathies 6,685. (11) Collective fines imposed—Rs. 30,000. (12) Special Constables (appointment)—438. (13) Hindu families deserted with the help of Musalmans—10.

## LIST OF DEAD BY FIRING

## (a) MAHISGOTE (22.9.42) P. S.—CONTAI

1. Jamini Kanta Kamila—Tazpore, P.S. Contai
2. Ananta Kumar Patra—Patapukuria, Do
3. Chandra Mohan Jana—Ghole P.S. Ramnagar
4. Sarbeswari Pramanik—Dakshinsitala, Do
5. Shyamananda Das
6. Kunjabehari Shit

**(b) BELBONI (27.9.42) P.S.—RAMNAGAR**

- |     |                                    |               |
|-----|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 7.  | Bhajahari Rout—Belboni             | P.S. Ramnagar |
| 3.  | Banshidhar Kor—Kadua               | Do            |
| 9.  | Rajani Ghose—Sonakania             | Do            |
| 10. | Hemanta Kumar Das—Kadua            | Do            |
| 11. | Chaitanaya Kumar Bera—Madhabpur    | Do            |
| 12. | Baina Vharan Das—Mahapatra—Lalpore | Do            |
| 13. | Shibprasad Bhuia                   |               |
| 14. | Chandra Mohan Das                  |               |
| 15. | Sarbeswari Pramanik                |               |
| 16. | Ramprasad Jana                     |               |

**(c) BHAITGORH (1.10.42) P.S. CONTAI**

- |     |                                   |             |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 17. | Amullya Sasmal—Ukilchak           | P.S. Contai |
| 18. | Sudhir Chandra Maity—Basudebberia | Do          |

**(d) BHAGAWANPORE (29.9.42) P.S. BHAGAWANPORE**

- |     |  |                       |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| 19. | Judhistir Jana—Baman Simulia               | P.S. Bhagawnpore      |
| 20. | Bibhutibhusan Das—Bartan Simulia           | Do                    |
|     |  | (died in Thana Hazat) |
| 21. | Jaganath Patra—Nunhandi                    | Do                    |
| 22. | Sreenath Chandra Pradhan—Kulberia          | Do                    |
| 23. | Hari Vharan Bera—Gurgram                   | Do                    |
| 24. | Radha Kanta Das—Pandit of Kalaberia School | Do                    |
| 25. | Raghunath Mondal—Botuliachak               | Do                    |
| 26. | Haripada Maity—Gurgram                     | Do                    |
| 27. | Ranjan Maity—Khejuran                      | Do                    |
| 28. | Tarak Jana—Bendia                          | Do                    |
| 29. | Bharat Chandra Singha—Lalua Gopalchack     | Do                    |
| 30. | Jnanada Maity—Totanala                     | P.S. Bhagawanpore     |
| 31. | Paresh Chandra Jana—Gorhbar                | Do                    |

(died in Birbandar Hospital)

- |     |                                       |                       |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 32. | Krishna Mohan Chakravarty—Basudebpore | P.S. Egra             |
| 33. | Bhusan Samanta—Beudia                 | P.S. Moyna            |
| 34. | Dhirendra Nath Dalpat                 | (died in Thana Hazat) |

**(e) ALINGIRI (13.10.42) P.S. EGRA**

- |     |                          |           |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------|
| 35. | Bhagirath Rauth—Alingiri | P.S. Egra |
| 36. | Murari Mohan Bera        | Do        |

## (f) KHAR (12.10.42) P.S. PATASPUR

37. Kedarnath Jana—Pindrai P.S. Pataspur

## (g) TAPERPARA (8.10.42) P.S. PATASPUR

38. Gunadhar Santra—Amarpur P.S. Pataspur

## (h) BALYA GOBINDAPUR P.S. PATASPUR

39. Harekrishna Bar—Chandankhali P.S. Pataspur

## MIDNAPUR (Sadar) SUB-DIVISION

## LIST OF DEAD BY FIRING P.S. KESHPUR

(1)	Bankim Parai—Napara	Union No. 4
(2)	Satish Bhuia—Amanpur	Do
(3)	Satish Bhuia—Coa	Do
(4)	Sashibala Dasi—Torja	Union No. 3
(5)	Panchu Ghose Do	Do
(6)	Rampada Ghose Do	Do

## SADAR SUB-DIVISION

## [KESHPUR—P. S.]

Name	Father's Name	Village	Union No
1. Bankim Parai	Adhar Parai	Napara	4
2. Satish Bhuiya	—	Amanpur	„
3. Sashibala Dassi	—	Toria	3
4. Rampada Ghosh	Sital Ghosh	„	„
5. Panchu Ghosh	Jadu Ghosh	„	„
6. Satish Chandra Bhuiya	—	Kote	4

## HOUSE BURNT BY SOLDIERS

## SADAR SUB-DIVISION

## [KESHPUR P. S.]

Name	Vill.	Union No.	Amount of loss
1. Sisir Kumar Chowdhury	Khetua	3	1200
2. Sadhan Ch. Chowdhury	„	„	1200
3. Madan Mohan Paria	„	„	900

The police looted one cloth shop belonging to one man of village Parulia and burnt one house.

## TAMLUK SUBDIVISION

## Sutahata P.S.

Serial No.	Name of the Houseowner	Village	Date of occurrence.	Amount of Loss.	Remarks
1.	Dr. Janardan Hazra ...	Sizberia	3-10-42	3,000	
2.	Amulya Charan Khatua	Anantapur	—do—	6,000	
3.	Anil Kumar Khatua ...	—do—	—do—	6,000	
4.	Jatindra Nath Khatua...	Anantapur	3-10-42	6,000	
5.	Aswini Kumar Khatua	—do—	—do—	6,000	
6.	Jatindra Nath Maity ...	Rajarampur	—do—	1,000	
7.	"Arya Mission" House of Bhuban Bera ...	Ramgopal- chack	6-10-42	150	
8.	Kanai Lal Jana (Khadi Shop) ...	Chaitanyapur	—do—	2,000	
9.	Bhusan Bera ...	Ramgopal- chack	—do—	200	
10.	Kokil Chandra Das ...	Pana	7-10-42	200	
11.	Surendra Nath Das ...	—do—	—do—	200	
12.	Tarak Chandra Pramanik	Birinchiberya	8-10-42	500	
13.	Dhairya Pramanik ...	—do—	—do—	700	
14.	Kshetra Pramanik ...	—do—	—do—	350	
15.	Gostha Pramanik ...	—do—	—do—	355	
16.	Ramhari Pramanik ...	—do—	—do—	325	
17.	Tarini Kumar Tunga ...	Bhuniaray- chack	—do—	14,000	
18.	Nanigopal Samanta ...	—do—	—do—	800	
19.	Hrishikesh Ghora ...	—do—	—do—	400	
20.	Jamini Kanta Maji ..	Joynagar	9-10-42	950	
21.	Upendra Nath Bera ..	—do—	—do—	800	
22.	Ambika Charan Ghora ..	—do—	—do—	7,000	
23.	Basanta Kumar Ghora ..	—do—	—do—	550	
24.	Bhusan Chandra Ghora ..	—do—	—do—	550	
25.	Sarat Chandra Maity ..	—do—	—do—	650	
26.	Indranarayan Maity ..	—do—	—do—	350	
27.	Mukunda Lal Maity ..	—do—	—do—	300	
28.	Indranath Manna ..	—do—	—do—	350	
29.	Bhutunath Ghora ..	—do—	—do—	350	

Serial No.	Name of the Houseowners	Village	Date of occurrence.	Amount of Loss.	Remarks
30.	Gajendra Nath Ghora	... Joynagar	9-10-42	350	
31.	Dhirendra Nath Ghora	... —do—	—do—	350.	
32.	Bibhuti Bhusan Bera	... —do—	—do—	750	
33.	Gurai Chandra Bera	... —do—	—do—	250	
34.	Manmatha Nath Bera	... —do—	—do—	500	
35.	Gunadhar Bera	... —do—	—do—	700	
36.	Monmatha Nath Bera (Chotta)	... —do—	—do—	800	
37.	Nani Gopal Bera	... —do—	—do—	800	
38.	Ekadasi Bera	... —do—	—do—	250	
39.	Jyoti Prasad Ghora	... —do—	—do—	700	
40.	Rakhal Chandra Ghora	... —do—	—do—	350	
41.	Mukti Sopan Griha	... Hadia	15-10-42	500	
42.	Binode Behari Maity	... Brajalal- chack	—do—	1,000	
43.	Harijan Vidyalaya	... Iswarda	—do—	300	

### MAHISHADAL P.S.

44.	Thana Congress office	... Sundra	5-10-42	1,000	
45.	Nilmoni Hazra	... Rajaram- pur	15-10-42	850	

### NANDIGRAM P.S.

46.	Congress Office	... Iswarpur*	29-9-42	500	
47.	Girish Chandra Das	... —do—	—do—	150	
48.	Nilkanta Das	... —do—	—do—	150	
49.	Sashi Bhusan Bhunia	... Hanu- bhunia	8-10-42	200	
50.	Congress Office	... Gholepukur	—do—	500	
51.	Haradhan Pradhan	... Chandipur	11-10-42	300	
52.	Makhanlal Midda	... Ratanpur	12-10-42	250	

### ON THE DAY OF CYCLONE

#### Sutahata Thana.

53.	Satish Chandra Maity	... Babupur	16-10-42	3,000	
54.	Ashutosh Maity	... —do—	—do—	2,500	
55.	Mrigendra Nath Maity	... —do—	—do—	2,000	
56.	Purna Chandra Maity	... —do—	—do—	250	

Serial No.	Name of the Houseowners	Village	Date of occurrence.	Amount of Loss.	Remarks
57.	Kedar Nath Das	... Babupur	16-10-42	400	
58.	Bhagabati Charan Maity	Chaitanya-pur	—do—	2,000	
AFTER CYCLONE					
59.	Sridhar Chandra Sahoo	... Babupur	23-10-42	100	
60.	Purna Chandra Maity	... —do—	-- do—	400	Second time
61.	Sachindra Nath Nayak	... —do—	—do—	100	
62.	Kedar Nath Das	... —do—	—do—	100	Second time
63.	Satish Chandra Maity	... —do—	—do—	100	Second time
64.	Jatindra Nath Jana	... Guabaria	24-10-42	1,000	
65.	Sukumar Maity	... Amlal	—do—	3,000	
66.	Kedar Nath Maity	... Bardha-nyaghata	—do—	1,000	
67.	Paresh Chandra Maity	... —do—	—do—	100	
68.	Bhuban Chandra Maity	... —do—	—do—	200	
69.	Jogendra Nath Mal	... —do—	—do—	250	
70.	Sridhar Chandra Mondal	... Murarichack	—do—	2,000	
71.	Panchanan Mondal	... —do—	—do—	350	
72.	Debendra Nath Samanta	... —do—	—do—	1,500	
73.	Surendra Nath Samanta	... —do—	—do—	1,000	
74.	Indranarayan Samanta	... —do—	—do—	1,500	
75.	Krishna Prasad Bera	... —do—	—do—	600	
76.	Kalipada Bera	... —do—	—do—	300	
77.	"Natya Mandir"	... —do—	—do—	300	
78.	Mahendra Nath Bera	... —do—	—do—	700	
79.	Bhuban Chandra Maity	... Pana	26-10-42	200	
80.	Mukunda Lal Manna	... —do—	—do—	250	
81.	Panchanan Manna	... —do—	—do—	200	
82.	Nagendra Nath Sheet	... —do—	—do—	150	
83.	Abinash Chandra Maity	... Dariberia	—do—	100	
84.	Nandalal Bhunia	... Pana	—do—	500	

## MAHISHADAL P. S.

85.	Sarat Chandra Bag	... Goalberia	24-10-42	1,000	
86.	Congress Office	... Chunakhali	27-10-42	300	
87.	Nandalal Das	... Baikundu	29-10-42	2,000	

Serial No.	Name of Houseowners	Village	Date of occurrence.	Amount of Loss.	Remarks
88.	Gajendra Nath Das	... Baitkundu	29-10-42	2,000	
89.	Surendra Nath Das	... —do—	—do—	2,000	
90.	Monindra Nath Bhowmik	Chandipur	—do—	600	
91.	Hrishikes Bhowmik	... —do—	—do—	350	
92.	Nilmoni Maity	... Lakshya	30-10-42	200	
93.	Probodh Chandra Bera	... —do—	—do—	550	
94.	Sridhar Chandra Jana	... do	—do—	1,050	
95.	Panchanan Bera	... Kalikakundu	—do—	1,100	
96.	Bhupati Charan Patra	... —do—	—do—	1,250	
97.	Satpati Charan Patra	... —do—	—do—	1,200	
98.	Pravat Chandra Kuila	... —do—	—do—	1,400	
99.	Monmatha Nath Kuila	... —do—	—do—	1,000	
100.	Atul Chandra Kuila	... —do—	—do—	300	
101.	Hiralal Kuila	... —do—	—do—	300	
102.	Bhutunath Kuila	... —do—	—do—	250	
103.	Anudhaz Kuila	... —do—	—do—	2,200	
104.	Pulin Behari Kuila	... —do—	—do—	350	
105.	Mahendra Nath Kuila	... —do—	—do—	550	
106.	Dhirendra Nath Kuila	... —do—	—do—	800	
107.	Panchanan Kuila	... —do—	—do—	350	
108.	Asutosh Guria	... —do—	—do—	200	
109.	Asutosh Jana	... Lakshya	—do—	500	

### NANDIGRAM P.S.

110.	Jabakusum Bhaktadas	... Dhanyasri	27-10-42	4,600	
111.	Satish Chandra Sahoo	... Khodambari	30-10-42	1,500	
112.	Mritunjoy Sahoo	... —do—	—do—	1,000	
113.	Behari Lal Sahoo	... —do—	—do—	150	
114.	Sristidhar Pal	... Dhanyasri	—do—	150	
115.	Sudhir Chandra Das	... Babuia	2-11-42	300	
116.	Balaram Das	... —do—	—do—	700	
117.	Basab Jana	... Baraghuni	—do—	500	

### NAMES OF THE RAPED WOMEN TAMLUK SUB-DIVISION (Midnapore)

#### Sutahata P. S.

Name	Age	Village	Date	No. of culprits	Remarks
1. Kamalabala Dolai	16	Deulpota	6-1-43	2	
2. to 6.....(unwilling to expose)					

## TAMLUK P. S.

Name	Age	Village	Date	No. of culprits	Remarks
7. Female train passenger	18	Mechada Stn.	6-10-42	1	
8. —do—	30	—do—	—do—	1	
9. One lady	36	Bargechia	9-10-42	1	

## NANDIGRAM P. S.

10. Wife of Syamachand Das	25	Purusottampur	1-10-42		Pregnant
11. Benodini Das	28	Dihi-Kasimpur	11-10-42	2	
12. Wife of Manindra Jana	22	Bhagabankhali	—do—		
13. One lady	29	Ranichack	13-12-42		
14. Saila Bala Dasi	20	Kandapasra	16-1-43		
15. to 18. (Unwilling to expose)					

## MAHISHADAL P. S.

19. Charubala Karan	50	Lakshya	26-10-42	1	
20. Kamala Bhowmik	22	Chandipur	27-10-42	1	
21. Charubala Hazra	25	—do—	—do—	1	
22. Kusum Kumari Hazra	—	—do—	—do—	1	
23. Sindhubala Maity	21	—do—	—do—	2	

(Raped afterwards once again and consequently died).

24. One lady	20	Chunakhali	1-1-43	1	
25. One widow	25	Tetulbera	3-1-43	1	
26. Wife of Gunadhar Maji	—	Purba Srirampur	21-4-43		
27. Kananbala Maity	19	Masuria	9-1-43	1	
28. Kishori Bala Kuila	19	—do—	—do—	2	
29. Hiran Bala Kuila	17	—do—	—do—	3	
30. Dewani Bera	24	—do—	—do—	2	
31. Charubala Das	14	—do—	—do—	2	
32. Ambika Bala Maity	16	—do—	—do—	1	
33. Rajbala Bera	15	—do—	—do—	1	
34. Kusum Kumari Bera	32	—do—	—do—	1	
35. Bhagibala Dei	19	—do—	—do—	2	widow
36. Tukubala Bera	16	—do—	—do—	3	
37. Rasmani Pal	15	—do—	—do—	1	
38. Kiranbala Kuila	26	—do—	—do—	1	
39. Sailabala	22	—do—	—do—	1	
40. Chikanbala Mondal	16	—do—	—do—	2	
41. Kiranbala Gayan	19	—do—	—do—	2	



	Name	Age	Village	Date	No. of	Remarks
					culprit	
42.	Snehalata Dinda	16	Masuria	9-1-43	1	
43.	Pauti Bala Dhara	29	—do—	—do—	1	
44.	Raimani Paria	30	—do—	—do—	1	
45.	Kiranbala Seeth	32	—do—	—do—	2	
46.	Sushilabala Pal	22	—do—	—do—	2	
47.	Droupadi Maji	24	—do—	—do—	1	
48.	Niradabala Dei	35	—do—	—do—	2	widow
49.	Sailabala Maity	22	—do—	—do—	3	
50.	Pramadabala Bhowmik	25	Chandipur	—do—	3	
51.	Charubala Hazra	24	—do—	—do—	2	
52.	Sovabati Bhowmik	24	—do—	—do—	3	
53.	Provabati Maity	21	—do—	—do—	2	
54.	Karunabala Bhowmik	21	—do—	—do—	1	
55.	Pramilabala Bhowmik	20	—do—	—do—	2	
56.	Rajbala Bhowmik	25	—do—	—do—	2	
57.	Snehalata Mukerjee	25	—do—	—do—	2	widow
58.	Suhasini Das	20	—do—	—do—	2	
59.	Kshudibala Pandit	24	—do—	—do—	2	
60.	Josomati Maity	28	—do—	—do—	2	
61.	Satyabala Samanta	41	Dihi-Masuria	—do—	2	
62.	Bimala Samanta	24	—do—	—do—	2	
63.	Jnada Bar	28	—do—	—do—	2	
64.	Gunibala Bar	31	—do—	—do—	4	
65.	Kamalabala Maity	17	—do—	—do—	2	
66.	Rai Kishori Bar	22	—do—	—do—	2	
67.	Nirodabala Pal	22	—do—	—do—	1	
68.	Puntbala Bar	27	—do—	—do—	2	
69.	Gangabala Dei	16	—do—	—do—	2	
70.	Ahallya Bala	16	—do—	—do—	—	
71.	Basanta Bala	—	—do—	—do—	—	
72.	Sindhubala Maity	19	Chandipur	—do—	1	
				(Raped previously once, and died of serious female disease after nine days of this very occurrence.)		
73.	Satyabala Dei .	18	Phatatikri	5- 2-44	2	

Number of arrest...1970.

Number of Detenus...11.

Number of Convicts...560.

Number of lathi charges...24.

Number of firing resorted to...41 rounds.

Number of persons dead...76.

Number of houses burnt by the police...4.

Fine imposed by the courts...(a) Imposed...Rs. 11200/-  
(b) realised...Rs. 9371/-

Value of property confiscated...Rs. 9000/-

Cases of molestation of women...12.

Number of persons injured...2147.

Indiscriminate caning and lathi charges done almost throughout  
the district.

Three persons were hanged by their legs to a tree and were beaten  
with canes and lathis.

Organisations declared illegal...The Koraput District Congress  
Committee and the Primary Congress Committee  
under it.

Number of Government buildings attacked :—(a) Lakshipore police station, (b) Mathili police station, (c) Dasamontapore police station.

**Cutting and Sabotage activities :—**Cutting of telegraph wires, cutting of trees in the revenue forest estates, destruction of railway sleepers, attack on railway bridges, exhorted people for non-payment of taxes in shandies, picketing in schools, afgari shops and in front of courts 22 times.

**Number of demonstrations held...63 times.**

Number of arrest...84 (72 males and 12 ladies)  
 Number of detenus...32 (29 males and 3 ladies)  
 Number of convicts...52 (43 males and 9 ladies)  
 Number of firings resorted to...1 (at Kalamatia near Kaipara in  
 P. S. Binjarpore on 26.8.42).  
 Number of persons dead...4. Number of persons injured...3.

Collective fines imposed...5000/- on the non-muslim population of Maliasahi Kanthopoi, Aurangabad and Bari Villages P.S. Binjharpore. **WHOLE AMOUNT REALISED.**

Number of houses searched by the police...11.

Organisation banned...BARI ASHRAM (though the Ashram recorded in the police officer was situated near Malighai to the right side of the left embankment of the Brahmani river. At least property worth of Rs. 6000/- was destroyed with Sevaghar. This Ashram is Ramala Devi's Ashram).

### Revolutionary Activities :-

Number of demonstrations held...6. (a) Dharpur, (b) Balia, (c) Haldibasanta, (6) Hatsahi, (e) Bari, (f) Kaipara.

Number of hartals...1. at Haldibasanta.

Other sabotage activities...Openly done...records destroyed at Kaipara Post Office and at Baliapal Post Office. Some furniture destroyed at Rama Inspection Dak bungalow. Liveries and Badges of 40 Chowkidars and Daffadar taken off and destroyed.

## LIST OF DEAD PERSONS

### KORAPUT DIST.

#### Police Station Mathili

Name.	Village	Where died	How died
1. Samara Bisi Naik	Minjhariguda	Mathili	Thana firing
2. Narasingh Domb	Muaguda	do	do
3. Arjun Katia	Kudakguda	do	do
4. Ling Katia	Timasput	do	do
5. Gopinath Pujari	Sangumna	Koraput Jail	Illness
6. Kunda Sunjharia	Kiang	do	do
7. Guru Katia	Timasput	do	do
8. Udenath Udi	Baisaghat	do	do
9. Balaram Bhumia	Temurpali	do	do
10. Mangala Mudukami	Sarangiguda	do	do
11. Somenath Bhumia	Udegiri	do	do
12. Chandra Baka	Naikguda	do	do
13. Dama Pujari	Chalanguda	do	do
14. Sukra Gate	Saunliguda	do	do
15. Govind Kope	Galgaon	do	do

Name	Village	Where died	How died
16. Samaru Naik	Pithdaun	Koraput Jail	Illness
17. Arjun Bhumia	Sangumna	do	do
18. Narsingh Domb	Lalugaon	do	do
19. Chayatanya Pujari	Bakilguda	do	do
20. Laikhon Somarath	Sarangpali	do	do
21. LAKSHMAN NAIK	Tentuliguma	Berhampur Jail	HANGING

**Police Station Patuan**

22. Bhagat Kore	Jabagarh	Koraput Jail	Illness
23. Dambari Sisa	Maligaon	do	do
24. Bhagban Kore	Jabagarh	do	do
25. Samara Majhi	Sindhuput	do	do
26. Adu Gulari	Paratinfhi	do	do
27. Lingar Dhamurjoy	Sakulu	do	do

**Police Station Pattangi**

28. Katna Dara	Pattangi	Pattangi	Lathi Charge
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**Police Station Jeypore**

29. Bhagban Khil	Baghra	Koraput Jail	Illness
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**Police Station Bariguma**

30. Khagapati Pujari	Parasela	Koraput Jail	Illness
31. Cherunga Amanathy	Kaunra	Kaunra	Lathi Charge

**Police Station Nawarangpur**

32. Hari Amanathy	Mandahandi	Koraput Jail	Illness
33. Labanya Vatara	Sankumuli	do	do
34. Sudu Vatara	Mandahandi	Papadahandi R. Bank	firing
35. Khagapati Amanatya	Kangru	do	do
36. Ananda Gauda	Dukhugudu	do	do
37. Paramananda Saoure	Kangra	Nawrangpur Hospital	do

**Police Station Tentulikhunti**

38. Raghunath Randhari	Turangi	Koraput Jail	Illness
39. Gangadhar Mudli	Pilabasini	do	do
40. Ratan Bhatara	Kusami	Nawarangpur Jail	do
41. Sadasiv Rana	Machanga	do	do
42. Bali Saura	Dhandura	Papadahandi R. Bank	firing
43. Badi Amanatya	Vasari Padar	do	do
44. Ratan Randhari	Turunji	do	do
45. Sukuri Mudali	Muralabai	do	do
46. Ratan Pujari	Bhasaripadar	do	do
47. Ramachandra Amanatya	Phuppugaon	do	do
48. Ghasi Jani	Nuagan	do	do

<b>Names</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Where died</b>	<b>How died</b>
49. Dinabandhu Jani	Nuagan	Papadahandi R. Bank	Firing
50. Budhu Amanatya	Turanji	do	do
51. Jagannath Amanatya	Patraput	do	do
52. Sahadev Pujari	Padhaiguda	do	do
53. Manguru Vatara	Bhamuria	do	do

**Police Station Kodinga**

54. Dambaru Majhi	Landuguda	Nawarangpur Jail	Illness
55. Ghasia Ganda	do	do	do
56. Mudia Vatara	Kasagumunda	Koraput Jail	do

**Police Station Mydalpur**

57. Khageswar Majhi	Jamguda	Koraput Jail	Illness
58. Dhabul Paik	Chathguda	do	do
59. Bagti Vatara	Chopiguda	do	do
60. Dabi Kalar	do	do	do
61. Sukuman Vatara	Chopiguda	Koraput Jail	Illness
62. Parasuram	do	Nawarangpur Jail	do
63. Parasuram Mali	Chandrapur	do	do
64. Laikshan Mastra	Nuagura	do	do
65. Chiru Paik	Gopiguda	do	do
66. Archit Vatara	Usigaon	at his home	do

**Police Station Pahadahandi**

67. Bandaku Vatara	Ekori	Koraput Jail	Illness
68. Madhab Kajhi	Majhiguda	do	do
69. Basturia Vatara	Dalaiguda	Papadahandi river Bk.	Firing
70. Bhagwan Vatara	Mantiguda	do	do

**Police Station Dabugaon**

71. Kaliamajhi	Maniaguda	Koraput Jail	Illness
72. Jagu Majhi	Chesti Amb	do	do
73. Banamali Harijan	Patri	do	do

**Police Station Jharigaon**

74. Baga Pujari	Varandi	Koraput Jail	Illness
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**Police Station Nawarangpur**

75. Chamar Harijan	Malgaon	At home	Bayonet by R. Inspector Raghunath Choudhuri
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**Police Station Nawarangpur**

76. Shyamsundar Gouda	Saruguda	At home	Firing
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**Bari area (Unions No. 2 to 7), DIST. CUTTACK****(Kalamatia Firing.....26.8.42)**

1. Senti Mallik.
2. Sananda Swain.
3. Haribandhu Panda.
4. Mayadhar Bhuyan.

# HARROWING TALES

## TAMLUK—MIDNAPUR

### Statements of Women Assaulted Criminally

(a) "I, Sm. Sindhubala Maity, wife of Adhar Chandra Maity, village Chandipur, P.S. Mahishadal—am aged 19 years. I have got a child. On 9-1-43 last, about 9-30 A.M., a Police Officer—Nalini Raha, came to our house with a band of armed troops. They caught my husband and took him away, and forcibly committed criminal assault on me. I became senseless.....This is the second time I have been criminally assaulted."

(This woman had been assaulted on 27-10-42. After the second assault she died suffering from serious female diseases).

### Pregnant Woman Raped

(b) "I, Sm. Khudibala Pandit, wife of Haripada Pandit, Vill. Chandipur, P.S. Mahishadal—am aged 21. I am the mother of three children. On 9-11-43, at about 9 A.M., a Police Officer—Nalini Raha, came to our house with some troops. My husband was arrested and taken away. The Police entered our house at his instance, two soldiers tied my mouth with a piece of cloth and threatened me that if I shouted I would be shot. Then the two soldiers forcibly committed rape on me successively. I became unconscious. On regaining consciousness, I found that my husband had returned with bleeding injuries."

(This woman was pregnant at the time of the criminal assault.)

### Soldiers Commit Rape

(c) "I, Sm. Subasini Das, wife of Manmatha Nath Das. Vill. Chandipur, P. S. Mahishadal....am childless. I am aged 20. On 9-1-43, a Police Officer—Nalini Raha, came to our house with a band of troops. They caught my husband and sent him away. At the instance of Nalini Raha two soldiers tied my mouth with a piece of cloth and threatened me that they would shoot me if I cried. Thus the two soldiers forcibly committed

on me.....I became senseless out of a sense of shame and tempt.....I expect you will vindicate my honour."

(This woman received her normal diet only three days ago after suffering from Cholera.)

### Victim Unconscious

(d) "I, Sm. Basantabala Maparu, wife of Girish Chandra Maparu, Vill. Dihi-Masuria, P. S. Mahishadal....am aged 25. I am the mother of one child. On 9-1-43 the O.C. (Bara Daraga of Mahishadal) appeared with a band of soldiers. They caught my husband and sent him to a distance. At the instance of the O.C. three soldiers entered our house and approached me. They caught me and tied my mouth with a piece of cloth. The three soldiers forcibly committed rape on me. I became senseless.....On regaining consciousness I felt a bitter sense of shame and again fell unconscious."

(e) "I, Sm. Snehabala Beoa, widow of late Sushil Mukhopadhyaya, Vill. Chandipur, P.S. Mahishadal, am aged 28. I have four sons. On 9-1-43 a Police Officer—Nalini Raha, came to my house with some soldiers. Some of them caught my eldest son and sent him away. At the instance of Nalini Raha the soldiers caught me inside my room. The soldiers tied a piece of cloth round my face and forcibly committed rape on me successively. I became unconscious. On regaining consciousness. I found my son had returned with bleeding injuries."

### Assaulted & Raped

(f) "I, Sm. Raimani Paria, wife of Bhuban Paria, VIII. Masuria, P.S. Mahishadal.....am aged 30. I have one son. On 9-1-43 at about 11-30 A.M., a Police Officer—Nalini Raha, came to my house with some soldiers. They caught my husband. I was running away towards a nearby bamboo bush. Two soldiers caught me and carried me to my house. As I was crying, they tied a piece of cloth round my face and striking me with the butt-end of a gun, felled me on the ground and forcibly committed rape on me one after another."

### Horrible Tortures

(a) "I went to offer Satyagraha at Balughata bazar. I was arrested by the police and taken to Sutaghata thana.....After

evening, the Sepoys threw me on the ground and took away my cloth and made me completely nude.....They basted a mixture of soda and lime on my penis.....I could not stand the pains. I had to sign a bond and I got released.....I had to be treated medically for a long time. I suffered for many days."

(Sd/-) Chhabilal Bera.

Vill. Hatiberia.

Union No. 11, Sutahata P.S.

Dated, 1st April, 44.

(b) "I Satish Chandra Maity was arrested with other seven Satyagrahis while offering Satyagraha at Balughata Bazar. We were taken to the Mahisadal thana. There a police officer took me inside a room and beat me severely. Then, a high police officer took me to Tamluk. The 'Sahib' made me naked in a room and commenced whipping me incessantly. My buttocks received bleeding injuries.....Then he began pricking pins into my finger below my nails. Afterwards, he began putting pressure on my legs with wooden legs." Not satisfied with this, he made me lie on my back and pressed on my chest with his legs with boots on. I began vomiting blood. Blood also came out on my ears.....After some interval, I was urged to sign a bond. On my refusal I was again severely assaulted. The whole day I was not given any food. I was then sent to Sutahata thana where again I was urged to sign a bond. I refused and I was again beaten.....I felt severe pains in my chest. I felt great breathing difficulties."

(Sd/-) Satish Ch. Maity.

Vill. Machlandapur. Union No. 8, Mahisadal P.S.

Dated 19th May, 44.

(c) "On 13-4-44. I went to offer Satyagraha at Ramtarakhat in Union No. 4 of Tamluk thana. At about 7 A.M., the police Officer—Hem Ch. Bagchi, arrested us and took inside a hut. There they tortured us in various ways.....At 5 in the afternoon we were taken to Tamluk.....A police officer—S. D. P. O. took me inside a room where he stripped me of my cloth and severely beat me. After some cruel beating, he made me stand with my legs apart and inserted his finger into my rectum



and began to move it to and fro. This caused me severe pain. After ten or twelve minutes of cruel tortures, he stopped.....  
...For the next 26 hours I was not given any food. Then, I was given some rice only once in 34 hours.

(Sd/-) Kshudiram Kuila.

Vill. Birinchibasan, Mahisadal. P.S.

Dated, 18th May, 44.

: THE END :













